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CICERO'S *DE OFFICIIS* IN HUMANIST SCHOOL INSTRUCTION –
THE *PHILOLOGUS INCOMPARABILIS* HIERONYMUS WOLF
AND HIS GREAT COMMENTARY (1563)*

Hieronymus Wolf, who lived from 1516 to 1580, was one of the most prominent Classicists of the 16th century¹. He edited and interpreted various Greek, Latin, and Byzantine authors. His most important scholarly achievement was the edition, translation, and annotation of all transmitted works of the Greek orators Isocrates, Demosthenes, and Aeschines, which reached its ultimate form in two large folio volumes of 1570 and 1572². These works had no rivals at the time, and were not superseded until the 19th century. No other Classicist ever tried alone to edit, translate, and comment on all the works of the three *Principes Oratorum Graecorum*. Wolf served as professor and rector of the Gymnasium at Augsburg and chief librarian of the city library in the years 1557-1580, when he completed this extraordinary work, and earned much recognition for it. Nicolaus Reusner, another great humanist of the time, called him after his death *Philologus incomparabilis*³.

He had been taught at the University of Tübingen by Joachim Camerarius, and at the University of Wittenberg by Melanchthon. Wolf speaks several times in his commentary on Cicero's *De officiis* about Melanchthon and he is enthusiastic about Melanchthon's guides for the various liberal arts. When Wolf offered an overview of the sources and the guides of the four faculties, he named – for theology – only the Bible and Melanchthon's often printed *Loci communes theologici*.

Wolf compares Cicero's viewpoints with the Christian faith several times. He was convinced that the statements of Cicero and of the Holy Scriptures agree with each other to a very high degree. Of course, the

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¹ Záh 2000.

² (1.) Wolf 1570, (2.) Wolf 1572.

³ Reusner 1587, f. Z3 r.

Christian religion has priority in the cases where they disagree. In regard to the Christian denominations, Wolf was opposed to the hostility between them. He once wrote: «et Catholici et Evangelici sumus. Christiani vero quid ni essemus?»⁴, and he complained at another time that the followers of the two denominations do not fulfil their Christian mandate because of their controversies and their sins, thus being *Pseudevangelici* and *Pseudocatholici*⁵.

It is no wonder that Wolf, being a pupil of Melanchthon, was included in the Roman *Index librorum prohibitorum*. He was listed as an *auctor primae classis* with all its editions from 1559 up to 1862 (only in the last *Index* of 1946 does he no longer appear). In this way, he was defined as a heretic from the 16th to the 19th century, and all his works were forbidden to be read by Catholics. He suffered under that condemnation and wrote in his 1570 autobiography: «The papal anathematization was added, in order that I had not only one piece of bad luck»⁶. Conversely, it is astonishingly noteworthy that the Protestant scholar was nevertheless highly esteemed by many Catholics: his works were read by Catholics and recommended by clerics. This is documented by two copies of his editions of Isocrates and Demosthenes from 1570 and 1572, which I have seen⁷.

This edition of Isocrates was for a time in the possession of a Protestant Austrian nobleman, Baron Rudolf Wilhelm von Stubenberg, who lived in the 17th century⁸. The book must have come after his death into the possession of a cloister of Carmelites at Regensburg. The cloister was dissolved in 1810⁹.

The copy of the edition of Demosthenes from 1572 was for a time in the possession of a French Archbishop¹⁰ and came afterwards into the possession of a bishop of Vannes in Brittany. According to an entry written by the Rector of the Jesuit College at Vannes in 1696, this book was given by that bishop to a student of the Rhetoric class of that Jesuit Col-

⁴ «We are Catholics and Protestants, but why not Christians?», Wolf 1563, 313. The copies of the Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, [signature 4 LR 60](#), and of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, [signature 4 A lat. b 191](#), are digitally available on the Internet (seen 2019).

⁵ Wolf 1563, 604-605.

⁶ Záh 2013, XXIII, 29, «accessit, ne ulla calamitas sola esset, proscriptio nominis mei pontificia».

⁷ The editions are private property.

⁸ Wurzbach 1880, 117-146, here 136-137.

⁹ Morsbach 2019.

¹⁰ It has as Supralibros the coat of arms of an archbishop.

lege as first school prize in Greek prose. It seems that the copy remained in Jesuit possession. There is a stamp of the Jesuit residence at Nantes from the early 19th century on the endpaper.

Thus, German Carmelites and French Jesuits, and an archbishop and a bishop in France did not conceal their possession of works of Hieronymus Wolf, but esteemed them publicly without ever mentioning that these works were on the *Index librorum prohibitorum*.

Wolf, being *Professor utriusque linguae* at the Augsburg Gymnasium, had to give Latin instruction too. He esteemed Cicero more than any other author, as one may see from his following sentence: «The writings of Cicero are totally a golden stream of eloquence (a praise which he himself attributed to Aristotle); and I believe that I have not read anything similar in other Greek or Latin authors»¹¹. The parenthesis («a praise which he himself attributed to Aristotle») brings the origin of the image of the golden stream to the attention of the reader, since Cicero wrote in his *Academica* (II, 119): *veniet, flumen orationis aureum fundens, Aristoteles*. Wolf rather redirected the Ciceronian image of the golden stream to its inventor.

In early modern times, Cicero's *De officiis*, which he had addressed to his son Marcus, and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, which had the Latin title *De moribus ad Nicomachum libri X* and which was believed to be written to Aristotle's son Nicomachus, were regarded as the most important books on moral philosophy transmitted from antiquity. *De officiis* was the first classical text ever printed. It appeared at Mainz in 1465 and was there designated as *Marci tulij clarissimum opus*¹². At least seven editions of *De officiis* were printed in the years 1465-1470. The first German translation was published at Augsburg in 1531. Erasmus gave his fictive Timotheus the following words in his dialogue *Convivium religiosum*:

Pliny wrote [*nat. hist. praef. 22*] that Cicero's *Officia* should never be left out of one's hands; and they are indeed – in my opinion – worthy to be memorized word by word by all, but especially by those who are destined to administer states¹³.

¹¹ Wolf 1563, 22, «omnino aureum eloquentiae flumen (quam laudem ipse Aristoteli tribuit) sunt scripta Ciceronis: nec usquam vel apud Graecos, vel apud Latinos quicquam simile mihi legisse videor».

¹² GW [= Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke] 06921.

¹³ Erasmus 1967, 48-51, «Plinius scripsit, Officia Ciceronis nunquam de manibus deponenda; et sunt sane digna, quae cum ab omnibus, tum praecipue ab his, qui destinati sunt administrandae reipublicae, ad verbum ediscantur, mea quidem sententia».

Johann Albert Fabricius at Hamburg called Cicero's *De officiis* in his *Bibliotheca Latina* the most beautiful book on the law of nature and on moral philosophy¹⁴, and he quoted from medieval manuscripts the two rhyming hexameter lines:¹⁵

Excellent libros cunctorum Philosophorum
Isti quos fecit tres Tullius Officiorum.

These three books of Officia, composed by Cicero, surpass the books of all philosophers.

The *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle was the compendium for the university instruction leading to the grade of *Magister artium*. *De officiis* of Cicero was read in the higher classes of Latin schools. Therefore its text was often printed, with and without commentaries.

Wolf offered commentary on that text to his students too. He explicitly informed his printer Johannes Oporinus in Basel about that in a letter of June 1562, in which he also wrote to him that he might receive a manuscript of his commentary to Cicero's *De officiis* very soon¹⁶. He adds that many of his pupils asked that his explanations be printed after his treatment of the *Officia* in the classroom and that they even threatened to publish them from their own notes if he himself would not publish them. He wrote that he would be uncertain if he could publish something worthwhile given his predecessors. Rather, he had to assume that it would be better if he himself would give his annotations to the printing press in a revised and enlarged form. Therefore, he embarked on a revision of his comments. Wolf gave a similar justification for the publication of his commentary in the dedication letter of his edition, dated March 2nd, 1563.

According to these remarks, Wolf's commentary is the revised and enlarged version of the explanations which he gave to his pupils when they read Cicero's *De officiis*. Wolf did not reveal an important circumstance in these developments, in which he represented the publication of his commentary as forced by the wishes of his pupils and not as a consequence of his conviction that this commentary would surpass all former commentaries. His predecessor in the office of Rector of the Augsburg Gymnasium, Xystus Betulius¹⁷

¹⁴ Fabricius 1721a, 121.

¹⁵ Fabricius 1721b, 136.

¹⁶ Zäh 2013, Epist. No. 218.

¹⁷ Hartmann 1955.

(1501-1554), had also read the *Officia* of Cicero with his pupils and published a commentary at the very same press in 1544.

Wolf spoke generally of the existence of commentaries, earlier composed by great scholars, but did not mention one of them specifically. He avoided the commentary of Betulius, as his own commentary replaced it. Wolf did not criticize the former commentators, mainly out of respectful consideration towards their authors. But it is clear that he would never have given his much bigger commentary to the press, if he had not been convinced that it would surpass all the former commentaries on *De officiis*.

His edition was printed by Oporinus in Basel as a great Quarto in 1563 with a title which emphasizes its aims. It reads¹⁸: «M. T. Ciceronis libri tres de Officiis, una cum commentariis: quibus ea potissimum tractantur, quae sunt huius argumenti propria, quaeque et a vitiis atque erroribus revocant, et ad veritatis atque virtutis amorem ingenia non distorta impellunt, quatenus id quidem oratione mediocri consequi liceat». It was and still is by far the biggest commentary on *De officiis*. Text, commentary, paratexts and index fill 770 pages in Quarto.

Wolf mentions Betulius just once. In this case he shies away from a judgement on Betulius, but expresses at the same time his very high estimation of his predecessor with the following words:

Our Betulius, the great scholar, who rendered outstanding services to this school as well as to the whole *Respublica literaria* (my work might seem superfluous after his extremely erudite labours on this work)¹⁹.

Yet if Wolf would have agreed with the last opinion, he would not have given his commentary to the press. His recognition of the work of Betulius aims to win the sympathy of those readers, who still remembered Betulius with respect.

The edition of 1563 was printed again with revisions in 1569. Reprints appeared in 1579 and 1584. It is the only commentary to *De officiis* which was printed four times during the 16th century.

Wolf's commentary differs essentially from the usual philological commentaries. His Augsburgian colleague, Matthias Schenck (1517-

¹⁸ Wolf 1563.

¹⁹ Wolf 1563, 67, «Betulius noster, vir doctissimus, cum de Schola hac, tum de tota Rep. literaria praeclare meritus (post cuius lucubrationes in hoc opus eruditissimas, supervacuum hic meus labor videri queat)».

1571),²⁰ points out this peculiarity in a letter to Wolf, which is placed at the beginning of Wolf's commentary. Schenck explains that various commentaries of the same text often do not have the same aim. He mentions the following types of commentaries, and thereafter the distinguishing features of Wolf's commentary:

this one excerpted only the rarer words and the more obscure sentences in order to explain them, another noted down several reading variants and histories, and the others attempt to bring the structure of a work before the eyes of its readers. Or they finally collect and compare similar words and statements of other authors; but almost nobody, except you, revealed the motives for the precepts, showed their truth or falsehood, indicated their benefit, adapted the precepts to his own time, and compared them with the rules of conduct of his own century²¹.

Schenck's aims all refer to understanding the text, and they are all contained in Wolf's commentary too. This commentary is structured in the following way: Wolf continuously quotes one or more sentences of Cicero; then he adds textual variants under the abbreviation *V. L.* for *Varia Lectio*; finally, he gives – after the special *Lemmata* – his annotations in a smaller printing type, and indicates their topics with marginal notes. As a rule, his comments vastly outsize the Ciceronian passage in question; three lines of Cicero may be followed by five pages of commentary.

Wolf himself explains the structure of his commentary in his preface, and mentions at first how he handles the *Variae Lectiones*. Wolf secondly speaks of what Schenck called the οἰκονομία *operis*:

The disposition of the text will have to be indicated shortly, in order that the reader realizes how all is connected in order that he finally comprehends the form of the whole work in his mind²².

²⁰ Bolte 1890.

²¹ Wolf 1563, f. β2v – 3r, «alius vocabula tantum rariora, et sententias obscuriores, quas explanaret, excerpit; alius lectionis varietatem et historias annotavit; alius in οἰκονομίᾳ Operis oculis lectoris subijcienda, alius denique in congerendis conferendisque aliorum autorum similibus dictis elaborant; nemo autem omnium prope, te uno excepto, causas etiam praeceptorum indicavit, veritatem falsitatemve ostendit, usum monstravit, ad sua tempora accomodavit et cum sui saeculi moribus contulit».

²² Wolf 1563, 2, «Breviter indicanda erit dispositio orationis, ut auditores animadvertant, quomodo quaeque inter se cohaereant, ac totius Operis quasi formam tandem animis complectantur».

The *dispositio operis* is illustrated in Wolf's commentary by structural hints and by summaries.

He names as his third task the *declaratio brevis verborum et rerum*. He also often mentions similar statements of other authors. They belong in most cases to Classical antiquity. It would take too much time to name all the Greek and Latin poetic and prose authors from Homer and Hesiod to Augustine. Horace and Euripides are favourites among the poets. Besides the ancient and Christian authors, particularly the letters of Paul, some modern humanist authors appear. They are especially from Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, like his predecessor Betulius, his friend and teacher Camerarius, and Desiderius Erasmus, the physician Johannes Fernelius, the philosopher Sebastianus Foxius, the botanist Leonhardus Fuchsius, the physician Laurentius Frisius, Henricus Glareanus, Melancthon, Vincentius Opsopaeus, Johannes Stigel, Johannes Sturm, Theodor Zwinger, and from other parts of Europe, Hermolaus Barbarus, Caelius Calcagninus, Sebastianus Castellio, Urceus Codrus, Coelius Secundus Curio, Thomas More, Marcellus Palingenius, Petrarca, the much recommended Jovianus Pontanus, Petrus Ramus, Jacobus Sadoletus, Georgius, the equally recommended Laurentius Valla, and Ludovicus Vives. Wolf limited himself in his comments mostly to ancient authors, but his knowledge of modern humanist authors is apparent too.

Most important for Wolf is the question of whether the author makes correct statements, and whether the admonished reader draws personal benefits from the text. Thus, the commentary becomes instructional for the young pupils but also for adult readers as well. Wolf emphasizes this point in his preface with these words:

I regard it as especially necessary and peculiar to our topic to emphasize that which is appropriate to good behaviour. For that is the main business of this work, the other things are minor matters. [...] The real aim is to understand what is true and what is false, what is honourable and what is disgraceful, what is damaging and what is helpful, and to have ready what was understood in all councils at all conversations and all actions, and to show it in one's life and in one's behaviour²³.

²³ Wolf 1563, 3, «Illud autem et maxime necessarium, et huius argumenti proprium esse iudico, ut quae ad bonos mores pertinent imprimis inculcentur. Hoc enim τὸ ἔργον et caput est huius operis. Cetera πάρεργα sunt. [...] proprium autem huius doctrinae finem, intelligere quid verum, quid falsum, quid honestum, quid turpe sit: quid noceat, quid ex-

Wolf placed two relevant quotes from Aristotle and Cicero on the title page right at the beginning. Aristotle wrote at the beginning of the second book of his *Nicomachean Ethics* that the aim of ethics is not only theoretical knowledge, but also corresponding action: «We do not look at it in order to see what virtue is, but in order to become morally good»²⁴. Under that sentence of Aristotle is placed the following sentence of Cicero: «All glory of virtue consists in action»²⁵. When Wolf reaches this sentence later in the text of *De officiis*, he notes in his commentary: «A memorable sentence»²⁶ and quotes in addition a similar statement from Cicero's *Laelius* 70, *fructus enim ingenii et virtutis omnisque praestantiae tum maxumus capitur, cum in proximum quemque confertur*, «The fruit of the mind and the virtue of each excellence is best apprehended, when it is used for the next one», and after it Wolf, following a letter of the apostle Paul (*Gal.* 5), writes: «he is giving evidence of his faith, which is made effective by love» and he adds the words of Christ from Matthew 7 that one should evaluate the faith from its works as the tree from its fruits. Wolf returns in the epilogue of *De officiis* to that sentence of Cicero and declares²⁷:

All glory of virtue consists in its action, as Cicero said at the beginning of this work. For the doctrine about correct behaviour, about the protection of property, and about the administration of the state has a practical aim, not a theoretical one; that is, it is not enough to know it and to be able to discuss it, but these things have to be executed through actions and have to be represented by actions.

Wolf made this principle, that ethics are not only a theoretical discipline but also an admonition for corresponding actions, the main focus of his whole commentary. In this respect his commentary distinguishes itself from others that only aim at elucidating the meaning of the text. Wolf's commentary allowed the reading of *De officiis* to become part of the moral education which the Latin school delivered.

pediat et quae intellexerint, in omnibus consiliis, in omnibus sermonibus atque actionibus in promptu habere, et ipsa vita et moribus praestare».

²⁴ Arist. *EN* 2, 2, 1103b28, Οὐχ ἵν' εἰδῶμεν τί ἐστὶν ἀρετὴ, σκεπτόμεθα: ἀλλ' ἵν' ἀγαθοὶ γενώμεθα.

²⁵ Cicero, *off.* 1, 19, *virtutis laus omnis in actione consistit*.

²⁶ Wolf 1563, 114, «Memorabilis sententia».

²⁷ Wolf 1563, 669, «omnis enim laus virtutis (ut huius Operis initio dixit) in actione consistit. Doctrina enim de moribus, de re familiari tuenda, de gerenda re publica finem habet practicum, non theoreticum; id est, non satis est haec scire ac de illis disputare posse, sed perficienda re ipsa sunt et ipso opere exhibenda».

The fact that Cicero addressed *De officiis* to his son Marcus, who was studying at Athens, and that he dealt with the correct behaviour of humans within the community, made it possible for Wolf to address his pupils in his commentary and to discuss correct behaviour in human life in an encyclopaedic way together with admonitions to act correspondingly. This made his commentary more extensive and at the same time more easily readable than the usual philological commentaries on ancient authors. A consequence of its predominantly moral orientation was – on the other side – that modern research regarded his commentary as unimportant for the history of philology. Thus, it was not mentioned in the standard histories of Latin literature or in the lengthy article on the philosophical writings of Cicero in Pauly-Wissowa and not even in Zieliński's *Cicero im Wandel der Jahrhunderte* or in the histories of classical philology by Sandys or Pfeiffer.

The commentary of Wolf is so rich that it is difficult to illustrate it by a selection of examples. The most diverse aspects could be shown. Because the addressees are primarily elder pupils at secondary schools and their teachers, Wolf often added passages which deal with the education and the spiritual development of the students, matters which were for him of primary importance. Therefore, I shall show in the following eight excerpts how he imagined an ideal humanist education.

1. When Cicero states that the search for truth is peculiar to human beings (*off.* 1, 4), Wolf writes about the schools as necessary for the youth and quotes poems of Ovid, Urceus Codrus and Stigel:

The Greek word σχολή means leisure, and places which are destined for studies and learning are named with that word. Those oppressed by physical work or by psychological excitements are not free to visit them. Ovid is correct when he says: «Poems are a cheerful work and want peace of mind» [*Ov. trist.* 5, 12, 3-4]. «They require the seclusion of the writer and leisure» [*trist.* 1, 1, 41]. One may conclude that boys and adolescents should spend all their time on studies, because they are still free of business and cares [...] and stand out for the strength of their mind and their good memory. There are also health and physical agility as never in their later life. Urceus Codrus rightly admonishes in a poem: «Boys, do learn, as long as you still have that faculty! You will not have that faculty forever»²⁸. Stigel says no less elegantly: «If you will have been negligent of these things in the spring of your youth, you will not be able

²⁸ Codrus 1506, f. 65 v.

to harvest in the time of autumn»²⁹. Therefore, the young people should remember that the seeds of piety and erudition should be sown in that age in order that one may get a rich harvest in adult age³⁰.

2. To the remarks of Cicero about the things which belong to human life (*off.* 2, 3), Wolf gives additional annotations about schools and recommends the establishment of boarding schools in the former cloisters which had been dissolved by the Protestants:

The cloisters could be transformed to this purpose, after superstition and idle luxury have been banned and piety, honest discipline, and the study of the liberal arts moved in, by which the youth became erudite and useful and decorous for churches and communities. Then monks and superstitious people and useless burdens of the earth would not be produced, but theologians, jurists, physicians, philosophers, and schoolmasters. Thus, neither would talented children be neglected because of their poverty nor communities be burdened by new expenses³¹.

3. When Cicero confesses that he spent all his free time in reading and writing (*off.* 2, 1), Wolf writes a passage in which he condemns the premature ceasing of Latin learning by the order of parents – such Latin knowledge would only be a pretence in order to cheat the people:

²⁹ Stigel 1577, f. 230 v.

³⁰ Wolf 1563, 84, «σχολή Graecis otium est, eoque nomine appellantur loca studiis discentium destinata, quibus vacare non possunt, qui vel labore corporis urgentur vel animi solitudine anguntur. Recte Ovidius: Carmina laetum| Sunt opus et pacem mentis habere volunt.| Carmina secessum scribentis et otia quaerunt.| Hinc colligi potest, pueris et adolescentibus omne tempus impendendum esse studiis, quod omnibus negotiis et curis, necessariis praesertim (nam supervacuas multi sibi ultro accersunt) vacant, praeterea ingeniorum vigore et memoriae fidelitate praestant. Huc accedit etiam salubritas et alacritas corporum, qualis in reliquis aetatibus nunquam erit. Recte igitur monuit Codrus Urceus: Dum datur, o pueri, discendi copia vobis, / Discite: non semper copia talis erit.| Stigelius quoque non minus eleganter: Quodsi in vere tuae neglexeris ista iuventae,| Nulla tibi autumnii tempore messis erit.| Meminerint igitur adolescentes, sementem quandam pietatis et doctrinae hac aetate faciendam, ut adulti uberem inde messem percipiant».

³¹ Wolf 1563, 408, «in hunc usum converti monasteria possent, profligata superstitione atque ignavo luxu, et introducta pietate, honesta disciplina et optimarum artium studiis, quibus adolescentes eruditi et Ecclesiis et Rebuspublicis usui atque ornamento essent, non monachi et homines superstitiosi et inutilia terrae pondera, sed Theologi, Iurisconsulti, Medici, Philosophi Ludimagistri hinc prodirent. Ita fieret, ut nec bona ingenia ob inopiam negligenter nec Republicae novis sumptibus onerarentur. Sed haec fortasse beatorum somnia sunt optarique facilius quam sperari possunt, eorum utique (si dicere fas est) culpa, nec sine rerum humanarum clade, qui rerum potiuntur».

It is easy and joyful for a student and for someone who is somewhat knowledgeable in the *artes liberales*, to read much. But those who have no sufficient knowledge of the peculiarity of the language and who have no summary conception of the *artes liberales*, for which there are many excellent books, seem to be more negligent of what they do not understand when reading. The parents are in great error, who draw their children to other business after they hardly learned the basics of Latin. What is the use of Latin for those who are not able to write and understand that language well? This is a poor pretence, useless for the boys, perhaps a bit useful to cheat the people, but ridiculous and hateful to the erudite³².

4. While Cicero declares that he always combined Greek and Latin (*off.* 1, 1), Wolf restricts the learning of Greek to the more talented pupils:

If pupils start their studies late or if they are less talented or if they do not aim for a solid education, I may recommend for those pupils to spend the time and labour, which they would use in vain for the Greek, better for a more perfect knowledge of Latin³³.

5. When Cicero mentions the battle of Marathon and other Greek battles (*off.* 1, 18), Wolf urges a private reading of historians, because not all that is needed may be treated in school:

One must go for the historical facts to their authors, to Herodotus, Xenophon, Thucydides, Plutarch, Livy, Florus and Justin. These authors are to be read in private by the boys according to their age, inclusive of geography and chronology (historical texts are blind without them). For all cannot be taught by a teacher or at the same time. Therefore private study and a longer time are necessary³⁴.

³² Wolf 1563, 382-383, «multa legere homini studioso et in bonis artibus linguarumque cognitione mediocriter versato et facillimum et iucundissimum est. Qui autem nec proprietatem sermonis satis intelligunt nec omnium artium bonarum summam quandam tenent (extant autem multi praeclari libelli in hoc genere) hi negligere potius, ut ille ait, quam legere videntur, cum ea legunt, quae non intelligunt. In magno igitur errore versantur ii, qui liberos suos vix degustatis Latinae linguae initiis ad alia negotia traducunt. Quis enim Latinarum literarum usus illis esse potest, quas nec emendate scribere nec intellegere satis possunt? Fucus iste inanis est, ipsis pueris inutilis, ad decipiendum vulgus non sane incommodus, sed eruditus ridiculus et invisus».

³³ Wolf 1563, 14, «si qui tamen vel tardius ad literas discendas accedunt, vel hebetioribus sunt ingeniis, vel solidam eruditionem non expetunt, iis et ipse autor fuerim, ut quod operae in Graecis perderent, id Latinis perfectius cognoscendis impendant».

³⁴ Wolf 1563, 192, «historiae istae petendae sunt e suis autoribus, Herodoto, Xenophonte, Thucydide, Plutarcho, Livio, Floro, Iustino, qui privato studio per aetatem ab adolescentibus legendi sunt, adiuncta etiam Geographia et Chronologia, sine quibus veluti

6. When Cicero discusses the question of whether a seller has to mention all the deficiencies of a certain object to its potential buyer and when one opinion is that the buyer has only to be informed about that which the civil law prescribes (*off.* 3, 12), Wolf adds in a digression that certain basics of the scholarly disciplines should be learned even outside of one's professional discipline. Here he gives a survey of the disciplines of the universities and of the basic literature of their faculties:

It has been said at another place that each student should select a certain field for his studies, in which he spends his time and with which he earns his living, and that he should try to be outstanding in it, and that he should read in his leisure hours basic books of other disciplines too, not in the way that he should be able to decide difficult controversies and complex problems (that would be an endless undertaking), but in such a way that he is not totally ignorant of any honest and useful scholarly discipline. Prominent authors in theology are the Holy Scriptures themselves, in the study of law the so called *Corpus Iuris Civilis* and the canon law, in medicine Hippocrates and Galen, in philosophy Plato and Aristotle, in mathematics, although they deter because of their alleged difficulty, Euclid and Ptolemy, and so forth. Guides exist in philosophy, especially those of Philipp Melanchthon, who also wrote a guide to theology. In civil law, there are the books of Constantin Hermenopulus, Joachim Hopper and Christoph von Ehem, in medicine those of Fuchs, Fernelius and others. But I do not wish that these readings serve for an ostentatious display of omniscience (there is nothing more empty than that). I do wish instead that one acquires a certain solid and surely not totally unwelcome basic knowledge³⁵.

caecae sunt historiae. Neque enim a preceptore omnia neque eodem tempore doceri possunt aut debent. Opus igitur est privato studio et longiore tempore».

³⁵ Wolf 1563, 617, «dictum est alio loco quoniam studiosum certum quoddam studiorum genus, in quo aetatem exigat quoque victum paret deligere sibi oportere atque operam dare, ut in eo excellat. Succisivis autem horis methodos etiam aliarum artium et praecipuos cuiusque facultatis autores esse cognoscendos, non ita quidem, ut subtiles etiam controversias decidere et intricatas quaestiones explicare possit (id enim infinitum fuerit), sed ne ullius honestae et utilis doctrinae plane sit ignarus. Autores praecipuos dico in Theologia ipsa Biblia, in Iurisprudentia Corpus (ut vocant) iuris civilis et canonici, in Medicina Hippocratem et Galenum, in Philosophia Platonem et Aristotelem, in Mathematicis disciplinis (quanquam hae difficultatis opinione multos deterrent) Euclidem et Ptolemaeum, et sic de reliquis. Methodi autem in Philosophia extant tum aliorum, tum Philippi Melanchthonis, eiusdem etiam Theologiae compendium. In iure civili Constantini Hermenopuli, Ioachimi Hopperi, Christophori Ehemii. In Medicina Fuchsii, Fernelii et aliorum. Neque vero ad inanem ostentationem et πολυμαθημοσύνην, ἣς οὐ κενεώτερον ἄλλο [Athen. *deipnosoph.* 13, 610b], haec pertinere volo, ut faciunt ii qui se πανεπιστήμονας perhiberi volunt, sed ad solidum quoddam aut certe minus imperfectum doctrinae genus constituendum».

7. When Cicero mentions the building of a house (*off.* 1, 39), Wolf names a few fundamental books on architecture by Vitruvius, Baptista Leo Albertus, and Sebastianus Serlius, and then describes how a private study, which he – like Erasmus – calls a *musaeum*³⁶, should be structured in this way:

It would perhaps not be totally useless to describe the private study room of a studying man, if it would not be the fate of our order that we have to act mostly according to the will of somebody else and that we have to endure as we can, because we cannot do what we want. But if somebody has the possibility to select a private study room, I am of the opinion that he has to carefully consider the healthy location and the quietness and the amenity of the outlook and the garden (here Epicurus was not in error!). A pleasant habitation is indeed important for the nourishment of love for studies and for the relaxation and the incitement of the mind and for the strengthening of our memory. Then, I recommend a middle sized study room in which the books are in such an order that all are ready at hand and the ones in daily use lie in shelves easy to access. The table and the shelves should be so structured that it is possible to read and write while one is sitting or standing. Attention is to be given to the kind of light in order that neither does sunshine dazzle the eyes nor darkness impede the view. But everybody will be able to even better care for this and other things, if opportunity actually arises. Yet it would not be wrong here to say something about the library, if we had not already done this elsewhere. The young student is to be urged to acquire the best Greek and Latin and vernacular dictionaries and to read them carefully. And if he is reading something that is noteworthy, he should enter it according to the alphabet or at least note down the number of the book. Empty pages should be interspersed everywhere in order that it is possible to enlarge the dictionary. And the passages for the things and the words should be entered into the dictionary in their natural order. In this way, a kind of a general continuous index should support the weak and imperfect memory. Then, one should acquire a few very good authors in order to read them much, but not a lot of authors, as Pliny is saying, until one has found a certain place with strengthened judgement in mature age, where one may live honestly and continuously. Then one should finally increase the number of the useful books according to one's own decision and despise the stupid and superfluous books, which come to the public in our century in such great numbers

³⁶ Wolf 1563, 408, uses the word *Musaeum* for a study room and a classroom too. Thus, the word *μουσείον* or *musaeum* acquired during the 16th century the meaning of a room for humanist study. It is the origin of the modern use of the word museum with the meaning “building for the exhibition of collections of cultural objects”.

and which are full of quarrelling and curious disputations or bring nothing of their own, but mutilate and secretly change the texts of the ancients and have the only purpose of cheating the buyer out of his money and to causing a loss of his time which he will consume with their reading³⁷.

8. Finally, when Cicero declares that the mind is nourished by learning (*off.* 1, 30), Wolf enthusiastically confesses that he is possessed by an extreme feeling of happiness by his «meeting with the Muses» (that is, by his studies). He is calling the study of the liberal arts a paradise and he wishes that his pupils and other young people will undergo the same emotional experience. He wrote:

What, I ask you, are the studies of the good liberal arts other than a paradise, filled with all kind of delights? Here is Helicon, here Parnassus, here the long-haired Apollo with his golden lyre, here are the Muses, here the Graces. Knowing this sweetness, the shepherd of Theocritus calls out full of joy as if he were drunk [*Theocr.* 9, 31-36]: «A cicada is dear to other cicadas, an ant to other ants, a hawk to other hawks; and so to me the Muse and her song are dear, for they fill my house. For not more sweet to me is sleep or spring's sudden coming or flowers to bees than are the Muses. For whom they saw

³⁷ Wolf 1563, 338, «nos hominis studiosi Musaeum fortasse non inutiliter describeremus, nisi ea nostri ordinis fortuna esset, ut alieno arbitrato facienda pleraque sint et perferenda ὡς δυνάμεθα γάρ, ἐπειδὴ ὡς βουλόμεθα οὐ δυνάμεθα [*Clem. Alex. stromat.* 2, 17, 77]. Si quis tamen deligendi Musaei facultatem habuerit, ei et salubritatem et tranquillitatem et amoenitatem in prospectu et horto potissimum sitam (in hac enim re haud stulte sapuit Epicurus) spectandam censemus. Multum est profecto situm in commoda habitatione et ad amorem studiorum alendum et ad animum recreandum et ad excitandum ingenium et ad memoriam confirmandam. Deinde ipsius Musaei mediocre spacium probarim, in quo ita libri disponantur, ut et omnes statim ad manum sint, et quorum quotidianus usus est, in pluteis expositi iaceant; mensaque et plutei sic parati sint, ut et stans et sedens legere ac scribere possis. Habenda est et luminis ratio, ne vel splendor hebetet oculos vel tenebrae visum impediant. Sed haec et alia quisque in re praesente melius curabit. Neque vero alienum esset hoc loco aliquid etiam de Bibliotheca dicere, nisi id alibi egissemus. Illud tantum monendus est studiosus adolescens, ut optima Lexica graeca et latina et vernacula sibi comparet eaque studiose legat; et in ea, si quid annotatu dignum legerit, ordine alphabetico referat aut numero saltem sui codicis signet, passim chartis vacuis intersertis, quo sit augendi operis maior opportunitas; ac rerum verborumque loci, ut natura cohaerent, ita etiam in eodem volumine coniungantur; et infirmae atque parum fidae memoriae hoc velut perpetuo indice et generali consulatur. Deinde paucos, sed eos optimos autores sibi paret, ut multum, non multa legat, ut monet Plinius [*epist.* 7, 9, 15], donec confirmata aetate et iudicio certum nactus locum, ubi degere honeste constanterque possit, suo denique arbitrato paulatim librorum utilium numerum augeat repudiatis ineptis et supervacaneis, qui hoc seculo plurimi provolant in publicum aut pleni convicio-rum et curiosarum disputationum aut nihil afferentes suum, sed veterum scripta truncantes furtivae strigili mutant, ad id fere solum utiles, ut argento emungant emptores et iacturam temporis afferant, quod eis legendis impenditur».

with cheerful eyes, Circe never harms by her potions»³⁸. This happiness has been granted to me by divine generosity. For although I don't own a house, the small habitation which I have is so full of Muses that I almost miss a place, where I could deposit new books. Oh, I wish that the Muses direct their cheerful eyes to me, that they take pleasure in looking at me and that they protect me from the cups of Circe! Because I loved them so since the beginning of my life, and still love them so that neither the cicada is equally loving the cicada nor the ant the ant, nor the hawk the hawk, and that neither the flowers are sweeter to the bees, nor is the sudden spring or the sleep more pleasing to anybody. You young people will experience the same, as soon as you will have conquered the basics of the two languages. «Endure these troubles and hold on for happier times!»³⁹

Thus, he ends with a famous line of Vergil [*Aen.* 1, 207].

These eight excerpts may show which thoughts about schools, private studies, general education, study rooms and libraries and which sensations of happiness during studies were expressed by Wolf in his commentary – in connection with Ciceronian statements as well as in free digressions. These were important topics for him which he wanted to bring to the attention of his young and adult readers. They illustrate the great variety of thoughts and themes in this work. One does not expect such discussions in a commentary on Cicero's *De officiis*. Wolf is offering here a humanist method of moral education under the protective umbrella of Cicero.

³⁸ Circe changed men by her potions into beasts, like Odysseus' men into swine (Hom. *Od.* 10, 135 ff), that is: they lost their humanity by her.

³⁹ Wolf 1563, 260. «Quid quaeso aliud sunt bonarum artium studia, nisi paradus, omni deliciarum genere refertus? Hic Helicon, hic Parnassus, hic aurata cithara crinitus Apollo, hic Musae, hic Charites. Hanc suavitatem intelligens ille Theocriti pastor, laetitia velut ebrius exclamat [Theocr. 9, 31-36]: τέττιξ μὲν τέττιγι φίλος, μύρμακι δὲ μύρμαξ,| ἴρηκες δ' ἴρηξιν, ἐμὶν δ' ἄ μῶσα καὶ ὠδᾶ. | τᾶς μοι πᾶς εἶη πλείος δόμος. οὔτε γὰρ ὕπνος,| οὔτ' ἔαρ ἐξαπίννας γλυκερώτερον, οὔτε μελίσσαις| ἄνθεα, τόσσον ἐμὶν μῶσαι φίλαι. οὐς γὰρ ὀρώσαι| γαθεῦσιν, τῶς δ' οὔτι ποτῶ δαλήσατο κίρκᾳ. | Huius ego voti divina liberalitate sum reus factus. Nam etsi domum ipse non habeo, ea tamen domuncula quae me habet, plena Musarum est, ita ut prope spacium desit novis libris reponendis. utinam vero Musae benignis oculis me respicerent, meoque conspectu laetarentur, & a Circeis poculis me defenderent. Nam illas ego quidem ab ineunte aetate sic amavi, & amo adhuc, ut neque cicada cicadae, neque formica formicae, neque accipiter accipitri aequae sit charus & iucundus: ut neque apibus flores sint dulciores, neque subitum ver, neque somnus quenque magis demulceat. Idem experiemini vos quoque, adolescentes, superatis paululum utriusque linguae rudimentis. Durate, & vosmet rebus servate secundis».

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