

# Admiring the Greeks with Roman eyes: F. A. Wolf, Quintilian, and the Latin roots of German philhellenism

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This paper argues for the underlying importance of Latin learning in a key text of German philhellenism, Friedrich August Wolf's 'Darstellung der Alterthums-Wissenschaft' (1807). It contends that Wolf supported his educational authority by modelling himself on the Roman rhetorical writer Quintilian, and that he drew on him to formulate the notion of a philological encyclopaedia. First, this paper uncovers how Wolf's self-staging at the start of the 'Darstellung' channels Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*. Then, it shows that Wolf argued that *Altertumswissenschaft* was 'scientific' because it was 'encyclopaedic', and that he drew on Quintilian not necessarily to conceptualize, but to formulate, this conception. Uncovering the presence of Quintilian in Wolf's 'Darstellung', an influential programmatic text that asserted the superiority of Greece over Rome, this paper argues for the persistence of Latin learning, just as it was dismissed, as a key irony underlying this foundational work of modern classical philology.

## Introduction

In 1807, the German scholar Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824), a founding figure in the history of modern classical philology, published his landmark 'Darstellung der Alterthums-Wissenschaft' ('Presentation of the science of antiquity').<sup>1</sup> Wolf defined *Altertumswissenschaft* as the study of Greece and Rome 776 BCE–1453 CE and 754 BCE–476 CE, laying out twenty-four subdisciplines it should entail and excluding all other ancient peoples. Thus, he simultaneously broadened and narrowed down the field in a way that was to advance negative characterizations, particularly of Jewish culture.<sup>2</sup> Yet even in

<sup>1</sup> Already shortly after Wolf's death, the ancient historian Barthold Georg Niebuhr famously called him the 'eponymous hero' of German philologists: Niebuhr (1827: 257). See on this homage Ugolini (2022: 57). Wolf figures prominently in nineteenth-century histories of the discipline as epoch-making: e.g. Gudeman (1894: 66–7), Sandys (2010: vol. 3, 47–50), Bursian (1883: 548). The story of Wolf's request to matriculate as a student of philology in Göttingen in 1777 became a founding anecdote: Güthenke (2015: 270). Wolf was not really the first to matriculate as *philologiae studiosus*: Schröder (1913), Grafton (1999: 13). The *Darstellung* entered the tradition as his key work next to the 1795 *Prolegomena ad Homerum*: Pattison (1889 [1861]: 374), Bursian (1883: vol. 1, 543), Sandys (2010: vol. 3, 60).

<sup>2</sup> Compare Wolf's fragments in Markner (1999: 52 (§7); 54 (§16); 61 (1); 62 (2)). Wolf bases this exclusion on a distinction between *Civilisation* and *Cultur*: see Calame (2018: 2), who points out that in Herder, *Kultur* is also attributed to *Naturvölker* far away. On the emerging notion of 'culture' in the late eighteenth century see Carhart (2007). See Gossman (1994: 6–7) and Kurtz (2019: 219) on how Wolf laid the basis for a depreciation of Jewish culture.

the ‘classical’ antiquity he sought to articulate as a coherent, meaningful subject, he established a hierarchy between Greeks and Romans. The Greeks, for Wolf, were ‘the noblest humans’ who ever lived. Gifted with ‘originality’, they were the first to pursue beauty and wisdom disinterestedly.<sup>3</sup> The Romans, instead, were ‘not a people of original talents, except in the art to conquer and to rule’. While conceding that they imitated the Greeks with zeal and innovated the field of legal theory, he gave them second place.

Wolf’s formulation that the Romans knew how ‘to conquer and to rule’ recalls a famous Vergilian passage, the end of Anchises’ prophecy to Aeneas in the underworld.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Wolf explicitly referred to Horace to contrast Romans and Greeks. If in the present, knowledge could be pursued not just for utilitarian purposes, he wrote, the moderns ‘must chiefly thank the Greeks, whom already Horace, with a side-glance to his Romans, described as striving for fame only...’.<sup>5</sup> He thus appropriated Horace’s contrast between the austere, financially oriented, Rome of olden times and artistic Greece. To formulate the demotion of ancient Rome, Wolf drew on his Latin learning.

This paper reveals the even stronger presence of another Latin author at the heart of the ‘Darstellung’. It shows how Wolf drew on Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria*, the fullest treatise extant from the Graeco-Roman rhetorical tradition,<sup>6</sup> to stage himself as an experienced and authoritative academic teacher and to formulate his conception of *Altertumswissenschaft* as ‘encyclopaedic’, on the grounds of which he claimed it to be ‘scientific’.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it argues, Wolf paradoxically turned to Latin literature to frame a didactic project elevating Athens over Rome.

The ‘Darstellung’ first appeared as the first piece in the inaugural issue of a short-lived journal, the *Museum der Alterthums-Wissenschaft* (1807), co-edited by Wolf and the Hellenist Philipp Buttmann (1764–1829). This issue started with a dedication to none other than Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), who had encouraged Wolf to write the ‘Darstellung’.<sup>8</sup> Like Wolf’s essay, the dedication foregrounded the study of Greece. Wolf and Buttmann addressed Goethe as the German in whose works the Greek spirit ‘took a second dwelling’ and whose example could inspire ‘the teachable youth of the fatherland’ to study antiquity. The dedication has a strong didactic and patriotic dimension, claiming Greece as a source of inspiration for Germans, specifically.<sup>9</sup>

In the ‘Darstellung’ itself, Wolf famously presented a sort of manifesto of German philhellenism.<sup>10</sup> This movement of German-speaking intellectuals showing an enhanced interest

<sup>3</sup> Wolf (1807: 19–20, 22, 132–9).

<sup>4</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 6.851–3.

<sup>5</sup> Wolf (1807: 21–2). In a footnote, Wolf quoted an abridged version of Hor. *Ars P.* 323–4 (*Graius – praeter laudem nullius avaris*), *Ep.* 2.1.103–7 and *Ars P.* 325–6. In a footnote one page earlier, he quoted *Ep.* 2.1.93–100 to bolster his point that the Greeks were the first to pursue the arts just for the sake of intellectual exertion. As the Postclassicism Collective (2019: 101) write, the notion that the Greeks were the first source of civilization is first found in Latin authors.

<sup>6</sup> Quintilian presents a comprehensive discussion of the rhetorical tradition as it had developed by the end of the first century CE and describes the orator’s entire training, from birth to retirement, with an innovative discussion of early training; see, e.g., Adamietz (1986: 2240).

<sup>7</sup> The ‘Darstellung’ is famously pervaded by a tension between the claim to a ‘scientific’ approach to antiquity and the idealization of Greece underscoring its relevance: see Schmidt (1989: 72), Maufroy (2011: 14). Grafton (1999: 12, 28) traces a development from Wolf’s historicist *Prolegomena* to the more idealist ‘Darstellung’, attributing it to Humboldt’s influence. In a footnote, Wolf (1807: 126–9) extensively quoted from Humboldt’s unpublished 1792 essay *Über das Studium des Alterthums, und des Griechischen insbesondere*, building on his notion that studying the Greeks allows one to appropriate their qualities: Fornaro (1996: 112–17), Trabandt (2009: 27). Further on Humboldt’s influence on Wolf, see Fuhrmann (1959: 204–5), Irmischer (1989: 81) and Cerasuolo (2017: 247–8), who argues that Wolf drew on earlier fragmentary drafts of Humboldt’s text.

<sup>8</sup> Wolf and Buttmann (1807: iii–iv). Goethe had encouraged Wolf to start writing on 28 November 1806, after Napoleonic troops had closed the University of Halle and Wolf was in low spirits: Bernays (1868: 110–1).

<sup>9</sup> Wolf and Buttmann (1807: vi); compare p. 140. As Andurand (2013: 228) writes, by dedicating the *Museum* to Goethe, and claiming intellectual kinship between Germans and Greeks, Wolf legitimated *Altertumswissenschaft* as a German science. See also Lanza (1981: 542) on this patriotic dimension.

<sup>10</sup> As Ugolini (2022: 72) writes, since Wolf’s text represents a manifesto for a new way to study antiquity, it is unsurprising that the whole journal is dedicated to Goethe. And as Harloe (2015: 234) argues, Wolf’s promotion of Greek art and culture as normative recalls Winckelmann.

in Greek antiquity counted among its numbers influential figures like Goethe, the translator Johann Heinrich Voß (1751–1826) and the scholar and statesman Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), who during his tenure as Minister of Culture and Education in 1809 decisively favoured the ascent of (classical) philology to her nineteenth-century position of ‘queen of sciences’.<sup>11</sup> Particularly in the wake of Napoleon’s victory over Prussia in 1806, when Wolf wrote the ‘Darstellung’, the cultural model of French classicism with its Latin models was brushed aside, an affinity between Greece and Germany postulated, and the study of Greek advocated as a means of refining the German language.<sup>12</sup>

Wolf in the ‘Darstellung’ praised Greece, and did so in German, but he operated at a time when Latin still prevailed in scholarship and was only gradually yielding to German, a relative newcomer among European learned languages.<sup>13</sup> Wolf himself was not only steeped in Latin learning, but kept writing in Latin, as Anthony Grafton has noted.<sup>14</sup> Until the end of his career, he held that one must publish in Latin to reach an international audience.<sup>15</sup> It should therefore be no surprise that, as this paper argues, in the ‘Darstellung’ Wolf channelled Quintilian, one of Rome’s major didactic writers, to frame his own didactic project. What is remarkable, however, is the discrepancy between theory and practice, between Wolf’s programmatic promotion of Greece as opposed to Rome and his use of the Latin author Quintilian. This discrepancy shows just how strong the Latin substratum of Wolf’s Latin learning was, and complicates the neat narration, promoted by Wolf himself, of a direct intellectual affinity between Greeks and Germans.

Demonstrating how Wolf drew on Quintilian to frame his educational vision, this paper highlights a key irony underlying the ‘Darstellung’. It thus expands on the observation made by Suzanne Marchand that one of the ‘many ironies’ of German philhellenism is its debt to Latin writers, Roman copies of Greek statuary, Italian humanists and French philosophes.<sup>16</sup> First, this paper demonstrates how at the start of the ‘Darstellung’, the *Institutio* is present at the levels of quotation and verbal echoes, and how Wolf conjured up a parallel between himself and Quintilian. It then shows how Wolf claimed that his conception of *Altertumswissenschaft* was ‘scientific’ on the basis that it was ‘encyclopaedic’, and that he resorted, again, to Quintilian to formulate its encyclopaedic character — bypassing contemporary authorities to enhance his claim to novelty. Wolf built a parallel between himself and Quintilian to enhance his self-staging as an educational authority, and borrowed from the Roman author to set up the framework of an *Altertumswissenschaft* focused primarily on the study of ancient Greece.

## Quintilian and Wolf: teachers in demand

Wolf knew his Quintilian well, and valued him foremost as an educational writer. There is evidence for his repeated engagement with the Latin author from the early 1780s onwards. En route to take up his professorship in Halle in 1783, he reportedly stopped by

<sup>11</sup> See especially Marchand (1996: 25–8), Seifert (2020: 32) and Rebenich (2011: 119–26) on Humboldt’s key role in institutionalizing neohumanist *Bildung*, with philology at its core.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Billings (2011: 14) on the turn away from France and on how studying Greece was seen as a way of elevating German taste, and Fantino (2023: 5, 42–4) on Voß’ vision of his translations as an educational project. On Wolf’s view that philologists should enable others to access antiquity, see Güthenke (2020: 112). Cf., e.g., the formulation in Wolf (1811: 9) of the view that translation from Greek helps the development of German.

<sup>13</sup> See Leonhardt (2013: 245) and Waquet (2001: 82, 87) on German as a latecomer and on this acceleration, which can be gathered from the rapidly increasing numbers of German-language specialist publications; see also Jentzsch (1912: 235–8; 334–5).

<sup>14</sup> Grafton (2015: 8).

<sup>15</sup> This view emerges particularly from Wolf’s recommendations that junior colleagues and collaborators write in Latin: see esp. Reiter (1935: vol. 2, 100–1, nr. 485 to Boeckh; 105, nr. 490 to Morgenstern; 216, nr. 616 to Böttiger; 221, nr. 624 to Friedrich Jacobs). As late as 1812, he expressed, in print, the view that Latin was needed to overcome time and space: Wolf (1812: viii). Wolf’s stance corresponds to that of many seventeenth- to eighteenth-century thinkers, on which see Roelcke (2014: 52–3).

<sup>16</sup> Marchand (1996: 4).

Wolfenbüttel and found a codex of the *Institutio oratoria*.<sup>17</sup> In Halle, he repeatedly lectured on the *Institutio*, with courses on book 10 recorded as early as 1784 and 1785/86.<sup>18</sup> Most importantly, in notes on education edited posthumously, Wolf time and again referred to Quintilian as a key ancient authority on education, praising him specifically for the treatment of the education of the young in books 1 and 2 of the *Institutio*.<sup>19</sup>

In the introduction to the ‘Darstellung’, the *Institutio* figures prominently.<sup>20</sup> It is the only ancient text Wolf mentions, and there are several echoes particularly to Quintilian’s preface to book 1 of the *Institutio* (Preface from now on), which serves as an introduction to the entire treatise. Together, the explicit quotation and the clustering of echoes suggest a sustained self-modelling on Quintilian as an educational authority on Wolf’s side right at the beginning of his programmatic essay, a key moment for self-staging.<sup>21</sup> Since Wolf was writing in German and not in Latin, these echoes cannot be put down merely to a shared linguistic usage. That Wolf should model his scholarly persona on Quintilian is both noteworthy considering his promotion of Greece over Rome and plausible given his familiarity with the Roman author.<sup>22</sup> This section summarizes Quintilian’s Preface and Wolf’s introduction before discussing Wolf’s quotation of and potential allusions to Quintilian.

Quintilian famously opened his Preface by claiming that once he retired after twenty years of teaching, his friends, irritated by the contradictory mass of extant books on rhetoric, begged him to write something (*Inst.* 1 *pr.* 1–2).<sup>23</sup> He complied with their wish, he said, but took on more work than they required (1 *pr.* 3). Other authors composed their works as if they were writing for readers already proficient — be it because they thought that basic studies were too insignificant, that they were not their business, or, ‘which is closest to the truth’, that writing about them would not allow them to display their talent (1 *pr.* 4).<sup>24</sup> By contrast, Quintilian stated, he would treat all the knowledge useful to the orator, even the most basic (1 *pr.* 5). He would hurry with this task for the sake of his addressee’s son (1 *pr.* 6), and also because lecture notes taken by one group of boys and one of youths were circulating under his name without his permission (1 *pr.* 7).<sup>25</sup> Then, he announced that the

<sup>17</sup> Körte (1833: vol. 1, 105). As Güthenke (2020: 51–2) has shown, Wolf had already alluded to Quint. *Inst.* 1 *pr.* 23–4 in the introduction to his 1782 commentary on Plato’s *Symposium*, which won him the support of the Prussian government. Furthermore, the premier scholar of Quintilian of the time, Georg Ludwig Spalding (1762–1811), in the first volume of his monumental edition of the *Institutio* thanked Wolf for mediating contacts who provided access to manuscripts, and described him as ‘... a man to whom, indeed, both I and my Quintilian are indebted not only for this one favour’: Spalding (1798: XLIII). See Reiter (1935: vol. 1, 301–3, nr. 260; vol. 3, 109–10) on the details of Wolf’s mediation.

<sup>18</sup> Arnoldt (1861: vol. 1, 120); see Reiter (1935: vol. 3, 14). Cf. also Arnoldt (1861: vol. 1, 238). Wolf’s familiarity with Quintilian can also be gathered from a playful quote in a letter to Johann Salomo Semler, prorector of Halle (22 September 1789). As the professor of eloquence, Wolf was charged with unifying the records of his colleagues. Reporting on this task to Semler, he commented that he only changed little and let smaller mistakes be, because ‘it is among the virtues of the grammarian not to know some things’ (*‘Grammatici est aliquid nescire’*). Casually quoting *Inst.* 1.8.21 in an abridged version, Wolf displayed his knowledge of Latin literature, showing himself as the right man for the task: Reiter (1935: vol. 1, 77–8, nr. 59; vol. 3, 20–1).

<sup>19</sup> See Föhlisch (1830: 43): *Manches Treffliche, besonders in den ersten Büchern, ist im Quintilian*; several more passages along these lines are in Körte (1835: 26, 28, 29, 31, 125, 67, 160, 254) and Arnoldt (1861: vol. 2, 10). Gottsched and Goethe similarly appreciated particularly Quintilian’s first two (and the last) books: Schirren (2021: 416–19).

<sup>20</sup> After the dedication to Goethe follow a blank page, a title page (‘Darstellung der Alterthums-Wissenschaft’), and another blank page. The introduction (3–9) follows with no heading. On page 10, the start of the essay is marked by an expanded title (‘Darstellung der Alterthums-Wissenschaft nach Begriff, Umfang, Zweck und Werth’).

<sup>21</sup> To follow the method that Knauer (1964: 57) formulated for Vergil and Homer.

<sup>22</sup> On scholarly personae, see Paul (2014).

<sup>23</sup> On this common introductory topos of ancient didactic writing, see Janson (1964: 50).

<sup>24</sup> All translations mine. The last reason is marked as the worst one: ‘showing off’ is regularly condemned in the *Institutio*, e.g. at *Inst.* 4.1.77, 8 *pr.* 18, 8.3.56, 9.3.74.

<sup>25</sup> The dedicatee Marcellus Vitorius is also addressed at *Stat. Silv.* 4.4, as Spalding (1798–1816: vol. 1, 7) noted. Quintilian addresses Marcellus Vitorius again at *Inst.* 4 *pr.* 1; 6 *pr.* 1; 12.11.31; he refers to the pirated manuscripts again at *Inst.* 3.6.68.

goal of his treatise was to educate ‘that perfect orator, who cannot but be a good man’ (1 *pr.* 9),<sup>26</sup> and distanced him from philosophers (1 *pr.* 10–20).<sup>27</sup> A summary of the *Institutio* followed (1 *pr.* 21–2). Finally, Quintilian claimed that he aimed for a ‘method of teaching’ supporting the learning process and that unlike other writers he only included knowledge useful from a practical point of view (1 *pr.* 23–5).<sup>28</sup> He ended by stressing the importance of talent next to training (1 *pr.* 26–7).

Wolf introduced the ‘Darstellung’ as an ‘encyclopaedic overview of the knowledge commonly called philological’ (p. 3). He began thinking about it, he claimed, when he started teaching in 1783–90, and lacking satisfying models, felt that he must explain ‘the definition, content, coherence and main aim’ of *Altertumswissenschaft* (p. 3).<sup>29</sup> He rejected three arguments purportedly often made in favour of studying antiquity: that it allows one to gain factual knowledge, to understand the ancient authors and to support knowledge useful in the present (pp. 4–5).<sup>30</sup> These and other misleading opinions, he wrote, doubled his ‘eagerness’ to join all the single elements pertaining to the study of antiquity ‘into an organic whole’, in order ‘to elevate it to the dignity of a well-ordered philosophical-historical science’ (p. 5). He added that he refined his views in lectures that seemed to happen ‘not without usefulness for studious youths (*lernbegieriger Jünglinge*)’, and then reprinted his own Latin lecture announcement (p. 6).

For twenty years, Wolf continued, he taught on the matter, developing his ideas further every time. Whereas he himself thought it best to defer publication as long as possible, parts of ‘the still very imperfect sketches’ he presented were divulged early on in print by G. G. Fülleborn and others. This put him in the same situation as Quintilian, he added, quoting *Inst.* 1 *pr.* 7 (pp. 7–8).<sup>31</sup> Even now, due to the lack of ‘leisure’ (*Muße*) he was just providing a German outline rather than the longer Latin version he had initially planned (p. 8), Wolf claimed. He ironically concluded that others might judge whether his essay justified the name of ‘science’ (*Wissenschaft*) for the study of antiquity, but that hopefully ‘none of the scholars who concern themselves with the knowledge of nature and the more exact sciences’ would exclude the study of humanity from nature; and that anyone who knew something about studying antiquity would agree that it shapes the human mind better than any other subject (p. 9).

<sup>26</sup> The perfect orator is famously defined at *Inst.* 12.1.1 as the *uir bonus dicendi peritus*. The maxim reflects a Stoic definition of rhetoric, but is attributed to Cato the Elder, which prompted discussion on whether Cato was influenced by Stoicism: see Reinhardt and Winterbottom (2006: xlvii–xlviii).

<sup>27</sup> The negative representation of philosophers is key to Quintilian’s characterization of the ideal orator, sharpening its contours by contrast and justifying the claim that philosophical knowledge should be ‘re’-appropriated by orators: see esp. Lana (1975: 11) and La Penna (2003: 151–3).

<sup>28</sup> As Zundel (1981: 4) writes, the ‘method of teaching’ advertised must refer to style. See Reinhardt and Winterbottom (2006: 199–201) on Quintilian’s emphasis on his flexible, hands-on approach; compare, e.g., *Inst.* 2.13.14; 4.1.62; 5.13.60; 8 *pr.* 2; 9.4.133.

<sup>29</sup> Wolf taught at the University of Halle 1783–1806, where he founded a philological seminar in 1787. Differently from C. G. Heyne’s in Göttingen, it separated philology from theology: Körte (1833: vol. 1, 105; 200–24) and Paulsen (1885: vol. 2, 210–29). Lanza (1981: 538) underlines the secularism of Wolf’s seminar and writes that it functioned as a model in the Prussian reforms. Clark (1989: 128) and Jackstel (1989: 87) similarly assert its exemplarity. Turner (1983: 462) attributes greater importance to A. Boeckh’s Berlin seminar. Palmieri (2023: 87) instead argues that F. Creuzer’s in Heidelberg was a model in Berlin and elsewhere.

<sup>30</sup> Wolf signals his disagreement at the outset: ‘Here and there one even (*sogar*) heard judging that...’. In a footnote, he damningly describes this stance through the Greek αἰσχροκέρδεια. Consistent with his praise of the Greeks as, supposedly, the first who pursued the arts disinterestedly, he repeatedly attacks this utilitarian view in the ‘Darstellung’ and elsewhere: Wolf (1807: 24, 129), Körte (1833: vol. 1, 236), and Körte (1835: 259–63, 291, 297, 299–361). Wolf’s stance is compatible with Quintilian’s at *Inst.* 1.12.17.

<sup>31</sup> Wolf gives bibliographical references in a footnote: ‘G. G. Füllebornii *Encyclopaedia philologica s. primae lineae Isagoges in antiquarum litterarum studia*, Vratisl. 1798. 8. Edit. altera auct. et emendatior cur. J. G. Kauffuß. Dieß ist ein Compendium nach den ersten Linien, die theils in Vorlesungen, theils auf einigen unvollendet gebliebenen Blättern: *Antiquitäten von Griechenland*, Halle, 1787, gegeben waren. Man vergleiche unseres J. E. Koch’s *Hodegetik für das Universitäts-Studium*, Berlin 1792, 8. S. 64–98. und Desselben *Encyklopädie aller philologischen Wissenschaften*, Berlin, 1793, 8.



Wolf's reference to Quintilian is the only one to an ancient writer in the introduction to the 'Darstellung', or rather to any writer besides his student Fülleborn. It reads:

Thus, it came about that he may relate the words of Quintilian to himself: '*As far as they could by taking notes, good youths, who however were excessively fond of me, circulated what they intercepted through the hasty honour of publication*'.<sup>32</sup> ('Darstellung', pp. 7–8)

Wolf quoted, and applied to himself, part of Quintilian's claim that students had divulged lecture notes without his permission:

For the one lecture, held over two days, the boys had excerpted for whom it was delivered; the other one, held over several days, good youths, but ones who were excessively fond of me, having intercepted it as far as they could by taking notes, circulated through the hasty honour of publication. (*Inst.* 1 *pr.* 7)<sup>33</sup>

Wolf thus explicitly compared himself to Quintilian. He only rendered the second part of Quintilian's statement, about the group of youths, thereby bringing it closer to his own situation as a university professor who would teach only young adults. Like Quintilian before him, reporting on the unauthorized circulation of lecture scripts Wolf implied that he sparked enthusiasm in his students, providing an indirect testimony to his teaching excellence. Also like Quintilian, he claimed that this situation increased his motivation to publish a more definitive, authorized piece of writing. The circulation of lecture materials by students was, of course, common practice in the late eighteenth century. Wolf himself was famously accused by his former teacher Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812) of having drawn his ideas on Homer from Heyne's Göttingen lectures.<sup>34</sup>

The circulation of pirated works by students on which both authors report is a (rather unsurprising) biographical coincidence. However, it is a coincidence Wolf exploited to create a parallel between himself and Quintilian as teachers. It is enhanced by Wolf's claim that the views he presented in the 'Darstellung' had evolved over time as he lectured, and that the lecture notes published by students granted only an imperfect snapshot of his views at an early stage. Quintilian at *Inst.* 3.6.63–5 similarly highlighted the provisional character of his lectures. Admitting to a change of heart in his teaching regarding the theory of issues, he justified it by saying that 'any longer effort spent on one's studies would be useless if it were not allowed to develop opinions better than earlier ones'.<sup>35</sup> There are no verbal echoes, but the stance is the same. Both authors differentiate between their lectures, which developed over time, and their writing, which purposefully happened only at the end of a long career and in which they present the sum of their teaching.

Wolf's mention of the duration of his teaching career further strengthens the impression that he was building a biographical parallel. Quintilian began his work by stating that he had just retired after twenty years (*Inst.* 1 *pr.* 1), Wolf remarked that he developed the concepts presented in the 'Darstellung' during twenty years of lecturing (p. 7). Again, the biographical overlap is coincidental: Wolf indeed taught at Halle for twenty-three years. However, the fact that he brought the twenty-three years down to the round figure of twenty, and that he did so just before comparing his own teaching situation to Quintilian's, strongly suggests that he was playing on the parallel.

<sup>32</sup> Italics here mine, to signal that Wolf in this section switched from German to Latin.

<sup>33</sup> Text used here and elsewhere Winterbottom (1970), translation mine.

<sup>34</sup> On the controversy between Wolf and Heyne, see, e.g., Nesselrath (2014). Wolf (1806: col. 592) himself argues that the author of the book reviewed integrated ill-digested material from Wolf's lectures. Compare Schirren (2021: 402) on Hugh Blair remarking, like Quintilian, on the circulation of lecture notes in the preface to his 1783 edition of rhetorical lectures.

<sup>35</sup> See on Quintilian's change of mind Holtsmark (1968: 364–8).

Another element that would not spring to mind on its own, but given the explicit reference to the *Institutio* is likely part of a sustained engagement with it, is Wolf's description of the target audience of his lectures as *lernbegierige(r) Jünglinge* (p. 6), a German equivalent of Quintilian's description of those he particularly hoped to benefit from his work as 'studious youths' (*Inst.* 12.11.31: *studiosis iuuenibus*). Quintilian's wish stands in the final paragraph of his long work, a prominent passage that Wolf would certainly have known.

Quintilian may also be in play in Wolf's remark that he was held back from writing a longer, Latin version of the 'Darstellung' by his lack of 'leisure' (*Muße*, p. 8).<sup>36</sup> The *Institutio oratoria* has come down to us preceded by a prefatory letter addressed to the bookseller Trypho, in which Quintilian claimed that Trypho had been asking him for his work daily and that despite being 'occupied by so much business' (*tot ... negotiis districtus*), he managed to write it in (only) two years. Wolf's *Muße* is a standard translation for the *otium* Quintilian lacked, and negates in *negotiis*.<sup>37</sup> Both Wolf and Quintilian had retired at the point of writing, both nevertheless emphasized their busyness and both claimed that they would have waited to publish if not for the circumstances: just as Quintilian would have followed Horace's advice to let the work rest for nine years if Trypho had not insisted, so also Wolf would have taken the time to write a longer Latin essay if not for the inaugural issue of the *Museum der Alterthums-Wissenschaft*.<sup>38</sup> The impression that Quintilian is an intertext for this and the other potential allusions is enhanced by a structural parallel: the dedication to Goethe by Wolf and Buttmann and Wolf's introduction to the 'Darstellung' form a double preface to the 'Darstellung', just as Quintilian's *Letter to Trypho* and Preface form a double preface to the *Institutio*. At the start of the 'Darstellung', setting out to present his educational vision of *Altertumswissenschaft*, Wolf drew on the Roman writer Quintilian to enhance his own didactic authority.

## ***Altertumswissenschaft* and Quintilian's 'circle of learning'**

Wolf's declared goal in the 'Darstellung' was to present *Altertumswissenschaft* as a coherent and methodologically sound field and 'to elevate it to the dignity of a well-ordered, philosophical-historical science' (*Wissenschaft*: p. 5).<sup>39</sup> Starting the main body of the 'Darstellung', he later contrasted 'sciences' (*Wissenschaften*) with a clear designation and disciplinary boundaries with 'parts of our knowledge' lacking them (pp. 10–11), complaining that 'the sum of notions with which we deal' still belonged to the latter category (p. 11). In the 'Darstellung', Wolf repeatedly compared *Altertumswissenschaft* as a whole or textual criticism to more 'exact' sciences, including mathematics.<sup>40</sup>

In Wolf's account, what made a discipline scientific was the formulation of what elements pertained to it, and how they related to each other.<sup>41</sup> To express this concept of

<sup>36</sup> Wolf's emphasis on his busyness fits with his representation as extremely hardworking in a string of anecdotes he likely helped spread to stage himself as a visionary, as Lanza (1981: 529–30) argues. See Krause (2021: 13–18) for a historical overview of the development of the concept of *Muße*. The fact that Wolf operates against a contemporary background in which concepts of *Muße* were discussed does not prohibit Quintilian being an intertext in his formulation here.

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., Matthiae (1749: 27): 'Musse'.

<sup>38</sup> Referring to Horace's advice at *Ars P.* 388 to let one's work cool for nine years, Quintilian showcases his literary ambition: Peirano Garrison (2019: 114–15).

<sup>39</sup> See Güthenke (2020: 110–1) on Wolf's goal to turn *Altertumswissenschaft* into a science by presenting it as a coherent whole, and on his awareness that this will require 'strategies of limitation', which entailed both the exclusion of oriental peoples and the demotion of Rome to second place. See also Bolter (1980: 86) and Cerasuolo (2017: 250) on Wolf's endeavour to make philology scientific, and compare Wellmon (2016: 36–40) on the systems of knowledge presented by Kant and others in reaction to information overload in the late eighteenth century.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. esp. Wolf (1807: 40–1, 48, 81–2, 106–7) and Wolf (1802: XXXVIII).

<sup>41</sup> Before discussing the different subdisciplines, Wolf (1807: 11–2) accordingly reviews possible names, settling on *Altertumswissenschaft*, and determines the boundaries of the field temporally and geographically.

interrelatedness between the different subdisciplines of *Altertumswissenschaft*, he employed the notion of a philological encyclopaedia. In the very first sentence of the introduction, he announced the essay as granting ‘a review or encyclopaedic overview of those notions that are commonly called philological’ (p. 3).<sup>42</sup> And to formulate the notion of a philological encyclopaedia, this section argues, Wolf again drew on Quintilian, namely on the request at *Inst.* 1.10.1 that the future orator should be trained by several teachers to achieve an all-round education, *enkyklios paideia*.

The eighteenth century had seen a great many encyclopaedias, the most famous example being the *Encyclopédie* edited by Denis Diderot (1713–84) and Jean Le Rond d’Alembert (1717–83).<sup>43</sup> Wolf did not operate in a vacuum, and his notion of encyclopaedia was hardly taken directly from Quintilian.<sup>44</sup> This does not mean that he could not have used Quintilian to formulate it, however. On the one hand, it would have been in line with conventions of early modern encyclopaedism for Wolf to channel Quintilian in his formulation. As Ann Blair has written, despite the differences between ancient notions of *enkyklios paideia* and modern encyclopaedism,<sup>45</sup> compilers of early modern encyclopaedias often referred to ancient authorities, particularly Pliny the Elder, to insert themselves into a venerable tradition.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, Wolf’s failure to mention the rich contemporary discourse when formulating (not necessarily conceptualizing) an encyclopaedic (and thus, according to him, scientific) *Altertumswissenschaft* is striking, but in character. In a footnote on page 8 of the ‘Darstellung’, he claimed that he consulted none of the works recently published ‘on the general character of philological study’ to write it, since he had ‘neither reason, nor leisure, nor inclination’ to read them, except when they came to his mind. Wolf’s failure to mention recent works, which he broadcasts for the essay as a whole, can be explained as an argumentative strategy: referring only to one ancient authority, Quintilian, Wolf strengthened his claim to originality in a contemporary context.<sup>47</sup>

As seen above, in introducing the ‘Darstellung’ Wolf claimed that he first felt compelled to formulate ‘the definition, content, coherence and main aim’ of the discipline when he started teaching in Halle (p. 3). A few pages later, he informed readers that the lectures in which he did so were entitled ‘Encyclopaedia and Methodology of the Studies of Antiquity’, and reprinted their Latin announcement<sup>48</sup>:

A philological encyclopaedia (*encyclopaedia philologica*), in which, once the entire circle (*orbe*) of those things that ancient literature rests upon is gone through, the extent, contents, interconnections, uses, resources of the single subjects (*doctrinarum*) will be illustrated, and finally the methods to treat each in a correct and fruitful way. (‘Darstellung’, p. 6)

<sup>42</sup> Despite his lengthy discussion of why *Altertumswissenschaft* is the best term for the subject, there is slip-page throughout the ‘Darstellung’, with *philologisch/Philologie* often used instead. See on Wolf’s choice of the term *Altertumswissenschaft* Markner (1999: 58). Classen (2002: 497) argues that despite Wolf’s rejection of the designation *classische Philologie*, the discipline owes its name to him insofar as his former pupils Koch and Morgenstern adopted it from his polemics against it.

<sup>43</sup> On the *Encyclopédie* as an international phenomenon and on its huge impact, also financial, see e.g., Shackleton (1970) and Darnton (1973).

<sup>44</sup> Wolf (1807: 118–19) quotes d’Alembert, even if not on encyclopaedism, but on the question of whether one should write in Latin or in the vernaculars.

<sup>45</sup> See König and Woolf (2013: 1–2).

<sup>46</sup> Blair (2013: 383–4). And as Grafton (1985: 41) has argued, Wolf’s encyclopaedic overview of philological knowledge, presented and subsequently perceived as innovative, was actually in continuity with polyhistorical forms of scholarship. It fits the bill of the description in West (2015: 1331) of premodern encyclopaedism as ‘a manifestation not just of info-lust, but of order-lust and wholeness-lust’.

<sup>47</sup> This matches Wolf’s pose as an innovator in the *Prolegomena*. As Grafton (1981: 103) has shown, their status as ground-breaking despite their indebtedness to earlier scholarship can be explained e.g. through Wolf’s claims to novelty and flashy style. On Wolf’s borrowings from biblical scholars, see Turner (2015: 118).

<sup>48</sup> Arnoldt (1861: vol. 1, 80) prints the start of the introduction to the ‘Darstellung’ and this lecture announcement together, dating the latter to the summer semester of 1785.



In this announcement, there are three verbal correspondences with Quintilian's requirement that the future orator should acquire a general education:

Now I will summarily add something about the other arts in which I think children should be educated before being sent to the rhetor, so that that **circle of learning** ('*orbis ... doctrinae*') may be achieved that the Greeks call *enkyklios paideia* (*encyclion paedian*). (*Inst.* 1.10.1)

Wolf's *encyclopaedia* harks back to Quintilian's *encyclion*, *orbe* to *orbis*, and *doctrinarum* to *doctrinae*.<sup>49</sup> These echoes suggest that this passage of the *Institutio*, standing in the part of the treatise (the first books) Wolf said he valued most highly, is an intertext here.

The claim that he drew on Quintilian's passage on the general education of the orator for his own formulation of an encyclopaedic study of antiquity is supported by a Wolf fragment, dated 1785,<sup>50</sup> published by R. Markner:

The name *encycl[opaedia]* describes in *itself* a *coherent*<sup>51</sup> presentation of *sciences* rather closely *related* to each other. **Circle of learning** (*Orbis doctrinae*) says Quintilian. For the Greeks and Romans, ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία meant the curriculum of notions that a *well-bred* man, who wanted to educate himself to be an enlightened spirit and, as there were no faculties yet, without fully committing himself to one science *professionally*, wanted to educate himself to be a states- and gentleman.

Wolf explicitly points to Quintilian as an authority for the juncture *orbis doctrinae*, which in *Inst.* 1.10.1 appears together with a transliteration of ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, a juncture Wolf also adduces. This fragment shows that he was thinking about the notion of an antiquarian encyclopaedia already during his early years at Halle, as Katherine Harloe has argued.<sup>52</sup> It further confirms that he had specifically *Inst.* 1.10.1 in mind when formulating his notion of a philological encyclopaedia, which was in turn central to his conception of a scientific *Altertumswissenschaft* devoted foremost to the study of ancient Greece, above Rome.

## Conclusion

In the 'Darstellung', Wolf defined *Altertumswissenschaft* as the study of ancient Greece and Rome. He programmatically set out to make the discipline 'scientific' by laying out its different subdisciplines and their relations to each other, a conception he formulated using the notion of a philological encyclopaedia. In the dedication of the *Museum der Alterthums-Wissenschaft* to Goethe and in the 'Darstellung' itself, he claimed relevance for the discipline by maintaining that the ancient Greeks reached incomparable cultural heights, and that the Germans were the modern people called to study and emulate them. Hand in hand with this vision went the devaluation of Latin learning: while ancient Rome was included into *Altertumswissenschaft*, it was given a second-class position. The 'original' Greeks, Wolf repeatedly stressed, were superior to the imitative Romans.

This paper has contended that in the very programmatic essay in which he elevated the Greeks above the Romans, Wolf drew on Quintilian, a Roman author, to frame his educational project. Firstly, this paper has shown that Wolf, introducing the essay in which he presented his educational vision of *Altertumswissenschaft*, modelled himself on Quintilian, one of the greatest didactic figures of antiquity, to assert his didactic authority.

<sup>49</sup> See on *enkyklios paideia* in Quintilian Fernández López (2010: 311); compare Plin. *HN* pr. 14.

<sup>50</sup> Markner (1999: 50, 69), who notes that the year (1785) is written in Wilhelm Körte's handwriting.

<sup>51</sup> In this passage, italics and additions in brackets are Markner's, boldface mine.

<sup>52</sup> Harloe (2013: 196).

Secondly, it has argued that Wolf also drew on a passage in the *Institutio* to formulate the encyclopaedic character of *Altertumswissenschaft*, on the basis of which he argued for its scientific character. Thus, this paper has uncovered a tension at the heart of the ‘Darstellung’. In this central manifesto of German philhellenism and foundational text of modern philology, a discrepancy emerges between theory and practice, between the idealization of Greece and the continued presence of Latin learning. Wolf borrowed from Horace to praise the Greeks, and, more importantly, from Quintilian to indicate how one should study them. This discrepancy shows that when Wolf wrote, in an age known for its philhellenism, the tradition of Latin learning was so alive and well that a Roman author could serve as a model for scholarly self-staging. In this way, this study alerts us to the specific historical context in which the ‘Darstellung’ was written and reveals the uneasy balancing of the different components of *Altertumswissenschaft*. Boundaries and inner hierarchies permeated the foundation of ‘Classics’ as a discipline — and continue to do so to this day.



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