

NICHOLAS OF MODRUŠ AND HIS LATIN TRANSLATIONS
OF ISOCRATES' *TO NICOCLES* AND *TO DEMONICUS*:
QUESTIONS OF AUTHORSHIP, SOURCES
AND DEDICATION*

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UDK: 821.14.03=124
Original scientific paper

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The article examines the uncredited Latin translations of Isocrates' parenthetic orations *To Nicocles* and *To Demonicus*, located in Rome, Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Lincei e Corsiniana, MS Corsin. 43.E.3 (127). In addition to the translations the manuscript contains two works of Nicholas of Modruš, a Croatian bishop who from 1464 until 1480 enjoyed a successful career at the papal curia. The bishop's authorship of the translations has long been under question. The article revisits this problem by drawing on new palaeographic evidence, comparing the versions from the Corsinian manuscript to earlier translations of the orations, and proposing a possible solution to the question of the unnamed dedicatee of *To Nicocles*. Finally, it includes the *editio princeps* of the *To Nicocles* translation, and a new edition of the *To Demonicus* (published with errors by Karl Müllner in 1903 and attributed erroneously to Niccolò Sagundino).

Key words: Isocrates, humanist translations from Greek, Renaissance Rome, Nicholas of Modruš, Giovanni della Rovere d' Aragona

The known oeuvre of Nicholas of Modruš (*ca.* 1425-1480), a prominent Croatian bishop and man of letters who spent the last sixteen years of his life at the papal curia, is still difficult to determine. Apart from eight fully or fragmentarily preserved works of various genres, from moral-philosophical treatises to orations and histories, along with a couple that have been presumed lost, the

* The final research for this article, as well as the editions of the translations, were prepared within the framework of the project *Croatica et Tyrolensia: A Digital Comparison of Croatian and Tyrolean Neo-Latin Literature*, supported by the Unity through Knowledge Fund.

oeuvre includes also two Latin translations of Isocrates' orations where Nicholas' authorship has long been under question.¹

The translations, of Isocrates' *To Nicocles* and *To Demonicus*, appear as uncredited works in a single manuscript copy, MS Corsin. 43.E.3 (127) of the Roman Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana. The fact that in addition to the translations this manuscript contains autograph copies of the bishop's *De bellis Gothorum* and *De humilitate* has led some scholars, such as Carlo Frati, and more recently Lucia Gualdo Rosa, to ascribe the translations to him as well.² The opposite stand was taken by Giovanni Mercati, an authority on the life and work of the bishop, who pointed out that the translations form a separate fascicule and were copied not by Nicholas himself but by a different scribe.³ Consequently, the two translations were often ascribed to the more famous Greek translators of the Renaissance. Thus Vilmos Fraknói, a Hungarian historian who was the first to take a deeper interest in the figure of the Croatian bishop, in 1897, attributed them to Guarino Guarini.⁴ Karl Müllner, on the other

¹ The preserved works include *Dialogue on the Happiness of the Mortals* (*Dialogus de mortalium foelicitate*, 1462/63), *Peter's Barge* (*Navicula Petri*, 1463), *On Consolation* (*De consolatione*, 1465/66), *On Humility* (*De humilitate*, 1470), *On the Titles and Authors of the Psalms* (*De titulis et auctoribus psalmodum*, perhaps ca. 1470), *On the Wars of the Goths* (*De bellis Gothorum*, 1472), *Funeral Oration for Pietro Cardinal of St Sixtus* (*Oratio in funere Petri cardinalis s. Sixti*, 1474), and *Defense of the Ecclesiastical Liberty* (*Defensio ecclesiasticae libertatis*, 1480). For the edition of the *Dialogue*, see Fernando Lepori, »Ragione naturale e rivelazione in una disputa alla Scuola di Rialto: Il 'De mortalium foelicitate' di Nicolò Modrussiese«, *Medioevo: Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale* 13 (1987), 223-296; for *Peter's Barge*, see Luka Špoljarić, »Politika, patronat i intelektualna kultura na ugarskom dvoru u prvim godinama vladavine Matije Korvina: Nikola Modruški i *Petrova ladica* (Studija, kritičko izdanje i prijevod)« [Politics, patronage and intellectual culture at the Hungarian court in the first years of Matthias Corvinus' reign: Nicholas of Modruš and *Peter's Barge* (Study, critical edition and translation)], *Grada za povijest književnosti hrvatske* 38 (2015), 1-81; for *De consolatione*, see Neven Jovanović, »Nicolai Modrussiensis De consolatione liber«, in *Hrvatska književna baština* [Croatian literary heritage], vol. 1 (ed. Dunja Fališevac, Josip Lisac and Darko Novaković), Zagreb, 2002, 55-251. I am currently preparing the editions of *De bellis Gothorum* and *De humilitate*, as well as the edition of *Defensio ecclesiasticae libertatis*, which will appear with Neven Jovanović's edition of the *Funeral Oration*. Some of Nicholas' works presumed lost, which the bishop refers to in *De consolatione*, have been highlighted by Neven Jovanović, »Čitanje Modruškog Marulićem: *De consolatione* i *Evangelistarium*« [Reading Nicholas of Modruš through Marko Marulić: *De consolatione* and *Evangelistarium*], *CM VIII* (1999), 137-168 (143-144).

² Carlo Frati, »Ancora a proposito di Niccolò vescovo Modrussiese«, *La bibliofilia* 18 (1916/17): 183-185; Lucia Gualdo Rosa, *La fede nella 'paideia': Aspetti della fortuna europea di Isocrate nei secoli XV e XVI*, Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 1984, 45-46.

³ Giovanni Mercati, »Notizie varie sopra Niccolò Modrussiese«, in his *Opere minori*, vol. 4, Vatican, 1937, 205-267 (231-232).

⁴ Vilmos Fraknói, »Miklós modrusi püspök élete, munkái és könyvtára« [The

hand, who in 1903 prepared the edition of the *To Demonicus*, credited Niccolò Sagundino with being the author, taking his cue from the 18th-century table of contents on the flyleaves of the manuscript which ascribed all the works to »Niccolò Sagundino bishop of Modruš«, thus confusing the Croatian bishop with the Greek émigré scholar in the service of pope Pius II.⁵ More recently, Monica del Rio identified, for the database *Edizione Nazionale delle Traduzioni dei testi Greci in età umanistica e rinascimentale*, the *To Nicocles* translation in the Corsinian manuscript as that of Carlo Marsuppini, and the translation of *To Demonicus* as that of Pietro Perleone.⁶ The error, which becomes immediately clear when the Corsinian translations are juxtaposed to the translations of Marsuppini and Perleone, is symptomatic of the problem that the question of authorship poses even today.

Intricately connected to the problem of attributing the translations to Nicholas is the question of whether or not the bishop knew Greek at all. The question was posed by Mercati, who noted the presence of two Greek manuscripts of Aristotle, Vatt. gr. 249 and 257, in the bishop's library. The answer to the question came recently from Antonio Rollo.⁷ He not only identified Andronico Callisto, a Greek émigré scholar who worked in the household of Cardinal Bessarion from August 1466 until mid 1471, as the scribe of the two Aristotles, but also showed that it was Callisto who added the missing Greek passages to Nicholas' copy of Aulus Gellius, Vat. lat. 1532, which had been copied around 1466 by Giovanni da Itri in Viterbo.⁸ Most importantly, Rollo drew attention to Vat. gr. 13, a manuscript of Theodore Gaza's Greek grammar, copied by the Greek scribe George Hermonymus (with one folio added by Demetrius Trivolis). Rollo identified not only the hand of Callisto in emendations to the main text, but also that of Nicholas himself in short notes in Greek to the text of the grammar, and a mnemonic poem at the end for the study of Greek declensions. Vat. gr. 13, which, as Rollo concludes, Callisto gave to Nicholas and which passed with Nicholas' library into the Vaticana, reveals that the bishop did make an attempt to learn the Greek language, at least to some

life, works and library of Nicholas bishop of Modruš], *Magyar könyvszemle* 5 (1897), 1-23 (17-18).

⁵ Karl Müller, »Isocratis Oratio ad Demonicum a Nicolao Sagundino in Latinum conversa«, *Programm des K.K. Staats-Ober-Gymnasium zu Wiener Neustadt* (1903), 1-9.

⁶ See the entries at http://www-3.unipv.it/entg/scheda_clas.php?cod=10945, and http://www-3.unipv.it/entg/scheda_clas.php?cod=10946; last accessed 15 December 2014).

⁷ Antonio Rollo, »Interventi di Andronico Callisto in codici latini«, *Studi medievali e umanistici* 4 (2006), 367-380.

⁸ Rollo, *op. cit.* (7), 370-375. For more on Vat. lat. 1532, see Paolo Cherubini, »Giovanni da Itri: Armigero, fisico e copista«, in *Scrittura, biblioteche e stampa a Roma nel Quattrocento: Aspetti e problemi*, vol. 1 (ed. Concetta Bianca et alii), Vatican, 1980, 33-63 (42-48, with plate 4 in the appendix of the volume). For the formation and contents of the manuscript section of Nicholas of Modruš's library, see Luka Špoljarić, »*Ex libris Nicolai Episcopi Modrussiensis*: Knjižnica Nikole Modruškog« [»*Ex libris Nicolai Episcopi Modrussiensis*: The library of Nicholas of Modruš], *CM XXI* (2012), 25-68.

extent. Moreover, this manuscript allows us to date Nicholas' efforts precisely to the time he came into contact with Andronico Callisto, more precisely, to some point between late 1466 and mid 1471, when Callisto departed from Rome. The proof of bishop's attempts to learn Greek casts new light on the question of authorship of the translation of Isocrates, a question which Rollo did not bring into the discussion. This is what the present article aims to do.

1. The Question of Authorship: MS Corsin. 43.E.3

While Giovanni Mercati acknowledged Nicholas' interest in Greek and accepted the possibility that the bishop did know the language, he rejected his authorship of the two translations on palaeographic and codicological grounds. As he pointed out, MS Corsin. 43.E.3 is a composite manuscript, and whereas the first two fascicules, which preserve the bishop's works, are autograph, the third fascicule, where the translations of Isocrates are located, is copied in a different hand. In Mercati's view, therefore, the translations were probably not made by Nicholas, but were bound together with his works at a later date.⁹

The approach of Lucia Gualdo Rosa, who touched on the Corsinian translations in her monograph on the reception of Isocrates in Renaissance Europe, was different. In addition to the fact that the translations are located in the manuscript containing other works of Nicholas, she stressed the religious tone of the dedicatory letter.¹⁰ She drew attention to the extensive quote from Book 8 of the Proverbs, as well as to the omissions of passages in *To Demonicus* that would have posed an issue only for a deeply religious translator. Indeed, a passage in which Isocrates spurs his addressee to »do honor to the divine power at all times, but especially on occasions of public worship; for thus you will have the reputation both of sacrificing to the gods and of abiding by the laws,« which, in a nutshell, presents religion as means to a political end, is not to be found in the Corsinian translation.¹¹ (One might add here that another omission can be found further in the text where the translator leaves out Isocrates' advice to be wary of flatterers [τοὺς κολακεύοντας], which might have had been taken as a warning against those dedicating their works to men in power.¹²) However, while Gualdo Rosa's insight-

⁹ Mercati, *op. cit.* (3), 232-233.

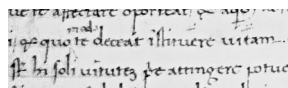
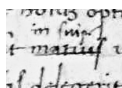
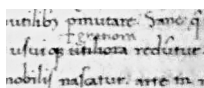
¹⁰ Gualdo Rosa, *op. cit.* (2), 43-47.

¹¹ Gualdo Rosa, *op. cit.* (2), 47; for the passage, see George Norlin (trans.), *Isocrates*, The Loeb Classical Library 209, London, 1928, 10-11: τίμα τὸ δαιμόνιον αἰεὶ μὲν, μάλιστα δὲ μετὰ τῆς πόλεως· οὕτω γὰρ δόξεις ἅμα τε τοῖς θεοῖς θύειν καὶ τοῖς νόμοις ἔμμενεῖν. In his edition of *To Demonicus* translation (p. 5), Karl Müllner adds his own translation of the passage *Venerare deum cum semper tum maxime cum civibus; sic enim et diis una sacrificare et legibus obtemperare videberis*. The problems of Müllner's edition will be discussed in the introduction to the new edition below.

¹² Norlin, *op. cit.* (11), 20-21: Μίσει τοὺς κολακεύοντας ὥσπερ τοὺς ἐξαπατώντας· ἀμφοτέρω γὰρ πιστευθέντες τοὺς πιστεύσαντας ἀδικούσιν. / Abhor

ful observations concerning the religious background of the author remain valid, they cannot be considered conclusive in proving the authorship of the translations. In order to remove any doubt in the authorship of the translation it is important to revisit the codicological and palaeographic features of the manuscript.

Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, MS Corsin. 43.E.3 (127) is a composite paper manuscript, consisting of three fascicules, 230x166mm in dimensions. The translations are located in the third fascicule (ff. 85r-96v), made of a single quire of twelve, with the dedicatory letter located at ff. 85r-86r, *To Nicocles* at 86r-91r, and *To Demonicus* at 91v-95v. Both translations were copied in dark brown ink by a single scribe. As was noted by Mercati, the hand is not that of Nicholas of Modruš; indeed, this unidentified scribe writes in a humanist book hand and has a penchant for using an inverted diagonal stroke in the capital N, as well as an extending and curving left stroke in the capital V.¹³ Yet, this is not the only hand that can be found in the fascicule. Next to a near-contemporary reader who at least at two places suggested emendations to the texts, and another who flagged the text of *To Demonicus* with manicules and vertical *nota* lines, Mercati and Gualdo Rosa failed to notice a third hand that can be found in between the lines of the main text: a hand which can positively be identified with that of Nicholas of Modruš. What is even more important to note is that Nicholas' interventions include not only interlinear emendations of scribal mistakes, such as those which can be found in books of classical authors from his library,¹⁴ but also authorial revisions of the style of the dedicatory letter and the translations. These revisions – such as the decision to change *gratiora* into *grandiora* and *utiliora* into *gratiora* in the dedicatory letter (4; see **Plate 1**), *matuis* (!; which may have been *mutuis* originally) into *in suis* in the *To Nicocles* translation (43; see **Plate 2**), as well as the correction of *quo* into *quomodo* and transposition of *instituere vitam* in the *To Demonicus* one (5; see **Plate 3**) – all provide conclusive evidence that we are dealing here with Nicholas of Modruš's own translations.



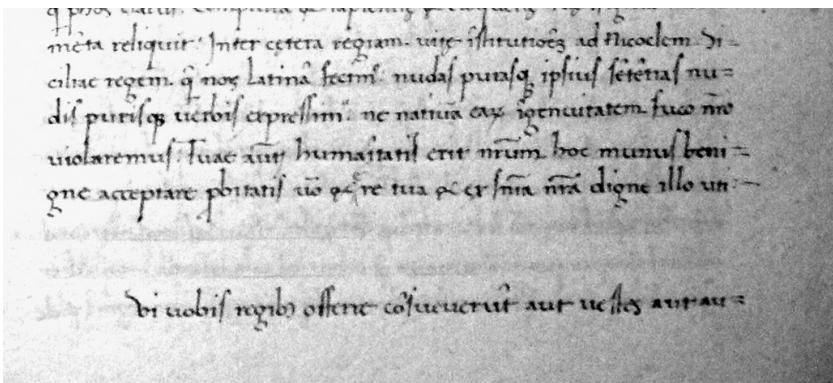
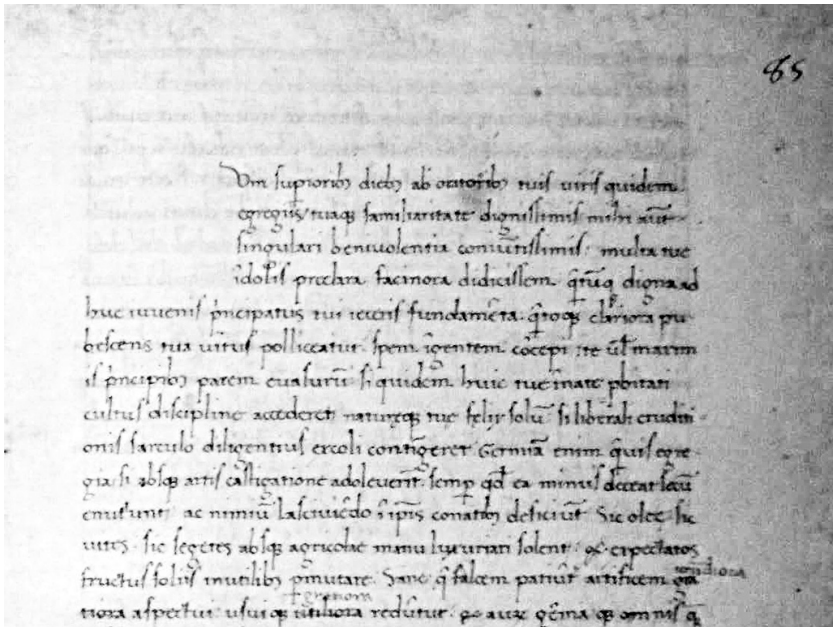
Plates 1-3 Examples of Nicholas' authorial revisions of the text

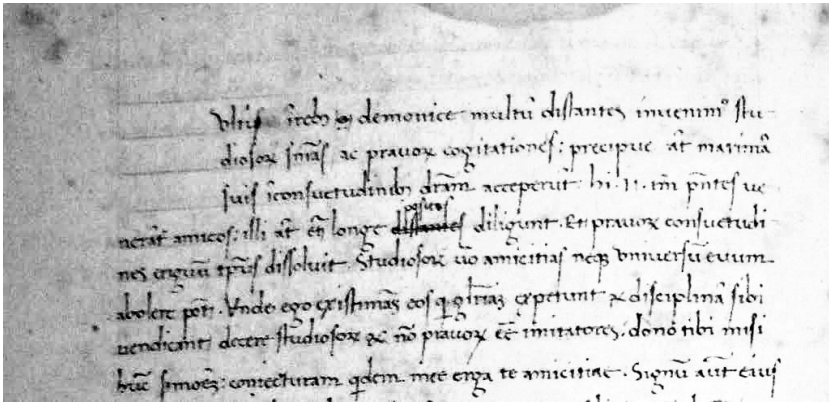
flatterers as you would deceivers; for both, if trusted, injure those who trust them (paragraph 25 of the edition). Again, Müllner in his edition (p. 7) adds his own translation: *Oderis as-sentatores ut fraudatores; utrique enim fide habita credulos offendunt.*

¹³ The dimensions of the written space are 166x107mm, with 29 long lines of text (first line above the upper border), and single vertical and horizontal borders covering the full length and width of the manuscript.

¹⁴ For Nicholas' practice of emending the texts in his library, see Š p o l j a r i ć, *op. cit.* (8), 52.

Before proceeding, one can also add a note on the copying process and provenance of the Corsinian manuscript. Judging from the *homoeoteleuton* mistake in the *To Demonicus* translation (21: *delinquentibus ... delectationibus*), which the scribe quickly realized and corrected, the texts were transcribed from an exemplar, rather than dictated by the author. This is also suggested by the scribe's erroneous rendering of what in the exemplar must have been a *repleam* written with a nasal abbreviation as *repleā*, which appears in the preface to the *To Nicocles* translation (31), and which the scribe expanded as *replena*. The scribe left space for rubrics,





Plates 4-6 Empty spaces for the missing *tituli* in the Corsinian manuscript

which were presumably supposed to be supplied later by Nicholas himself; the same procedure can be observed in the second fascicule of the Corsinian manuscript, which contains the bishop's *De humilitate*, and in Vat. lat. 8764, which contains his *De consolatione*. Judging from this lack of *tituli* and the authorial revisions to the main text, the fascicule once stood as a separate manuscript on the shelves of Nicholas of Modruš's personal library.¹⁵ The translations were bound with *De bellis Gothorum* and *De humilitate* probably at some point in the 16th or the 17th century, in any case probably after fragments of *De bellis Gothorum* and *De humilitate* were lost, and certainly before in 1730s Arrigo Arrigoni, the scribe of the Corsinian library, supplied the table of contents in which he identified the author of all the works as *Nicolaus Secundinus Episcopus Modrussiensis*.

It is important to note that, although today preserved together in a single copy, the translations were carried out as separate projects. The dedicatory letter in the Corsinian manuscript introduces only one work of Isocrates, the *To Nicocles*, making no reference to the *To Demonicus*. The *To Demonicus* translation, on the other hand, is not preceded by any similar prefatory text. The fact, however, that in his *To Demonicus* Nicholas deliberately omitted Isocrates' utilitarian views of religion and the advice on avoiding sycophants suggests that it was not a mere translation exercise and that Nicholas probably did intend to publish it. In any case, it is clear that the bishop's efforts to master the Greek language bore fruit in translations of two short orations by Isocrates, and that the publication of at least one of them aimed to present Nicholas among his peers as an intellectual versed in Greek.

¹⁵ For Nicholas' practice of supplying his books with titles and tables of contents, see Špoljarić, *op. cit.* (8), 51-52.

2. The Question of Sources: Earlier Translations of *To Nicocles* and *To Demonicus*

The choice of the texts was hardly a surprise. *To Demonicus* and *To Nicocles* – constituting (together with *Nicocles*) the corpus of the parenetic orations of the Greek rhetorician Isocrates (436-338) – enjoyed enormous popularity during the Renaissance.¹⁶ On the one hand, Isocrates' Greek is relatively easy, which made him a suitable author for proficiency practice; on the other, the works are short, which allowed humanists to carry out translations and present them to dedicatees and potential patrons in a relatively quick fashion.¹⁷ In addition to these advantages, the texts had a practical appeal for the devotees of the humanist program, as they offered ethical advice on how to lead one's life. While *To Demonicus* contains moral precepts suitable for any individual, *To Nicocles*, addressed to the king of Salamis on the island of Cyprus, is specifically dedicated to the question of how rulers should rule and behave. It is therefore no wonder that by 1480, when Nicholas died, no fewer than ten different Latin translations were made of *To Nicocles* (in addition to his own) and seven of *To Demonicus*. Our knowledge of them owes much to the aforementioned monograph of Lucia Gualdo Rosa on the reception of Isocrates in Renaissance Europe,¹⁸ as well as her specific case studies on the Latin translations of *To Nicocles*¹⁹ and *To Demonicus*²⁰ in Quattrocento Italy. The following overviews that provide contexts for Nicholas' own translations are based on these studies.

The first three translations of *To Nicocles* appeared during the 1430s. As early as 1430 Carlo Marsuppini had translated the work and dedicated it to the lord of Rimini Galeotto Roberto Malatesta; a year later Bernardo Giustiniani dedicated his translation to Ludovico Gonzaga, the heir to the marquis of Mantua; and in 1436 Lapo da Castiglionchio the Younger sent his version (in the making of which he relied on Marsuppini's) to Antonio Beccadelli Panormita, a humanist in the service of Alfonso V of Aragon. These three translations enjoyed great popularity during

¹⁶ Though Isocrates' authorship of *To Demonicus* has been disputed for a long time, »the overwhelming consensus is the work is Isocratean;« see David M i r h a d y and Yun Lee T o o (trans.), *Isocrates I*, Austin, 2000, 19.

¹⁷ Isocrates' orations were, next to the New Testament, Aesop's fables, Plutarch's *Moralia*, Lucian's dialogues and Demosthenes' orations, widely used in humanist schools as one of the first readings; see Federica C i c c o l e l l a, *Donati Graeci: Learning Greeek in the Renaissance*, Leiden, 2008, 135.

¹⁸ G u a l d o R o s a, *op. cit.* (2).

¹⁹ Lucia G u a l d o R o s a, »Le traduzioni latine dell'*A Nicocle* di Isocrate nel quattrocento«, *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Lovaniensis: Proceedings of the First International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies*, Leuven, 1973, 275-303 (295-299).

²⁰ Lucia G u a l d o R o s a, »Niccolò Loschi e Pietro Perleone e le traduzioni dell'orazione pseudo-isocratea '*A Demonico*'«, *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti: Classe di scienze morali, lettere ed arti* 131 (1972/73), 825-856.

the fifteenth century, as indicated by numerous surviving manuscript copies.²¹ The second wave of translations emerged during the 1460s and the 1470s.²² Leonello Chiericati in 1463 dedicated his rendition to Niccolò di Leonello d'Este, the unfortunate heir to the Ferrarese throne. Alamanno Rinuccini first around 1467 had plans to send his translation to Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, but changed his mind and in 1471 sent it instead to Federico da Montefeltro. Martino Filetico presented his translation to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III on the occasion of the latter's visit to Rome in 1468. Two translations were produced in the Aragonese lands: Lorenzo Lippi da Colle dedicated one to Lope Ximénez de Urrea, viceroy of Sicily from 1464 until 1475, while Giacomo Mirabella presented the other to Ferdinand, the heir to the Aragonese throne, at some point between 1468 and 1479. Rudolph Agricola's translation of *To Nicocles* can be dated to his studies in Ferrara, between 1475 and 1479, while a certain Fra Girolamo presented yet another to Federico da Montefeltro at some point between 1474 and 1482. As shown by Gualdo Rosa, in producing their versions these later translators often relied heavily on translations from the 1430s.²³ Moreover, while those from the 1430s enjoyed wide circulation in the intellectual circles of Quattrocento Italy, later versions are mostly preserved only in single copies, usually those that were presented to prospective patrons, among which one can find numerous high profile lords of Renaissance Italy.

Though somewhat less popular than *To Nicocles*, *To Demonicus* was also translated numerous times. The first rendering of the text comes from the pen of Guarino Guarini; it was made during his sojourn in Constantinople in 1407 and sent to Floro Valier in Venice. Just as Lapo di Castiglionchio the Younger relied on Marsuppini's translation of *To Nicocles* in 1436, so in the same year he used Guarino's to produce a new *To Demonicus*, which he then dedicated to Cardinal Prospero Colonna. We also find Pietro Perleone's translation from 1446/52 dedicated to the Genoese patrician Brancalione Grillo, and one of Niccolò Loschi, which seems to have been dedicated to the Venetian humanist Andrea Giuliano around 1437. Next to these four translations that are preserved today in numerous manuscripts – with Guarino's, Castiglionchio's and Perleone's being more popular than Loschi's (preserved in at least three copies) – one can find three anonymous translations that were preserved in a single copy each.²⁴

What immediately becomes clear is that both *To Nicocles* and *To Demonicus* were widely available in Latin translation by 1480, with the later versions regularly dependent on their predecessors. This poses the question of whether we can detect

²¹ Marsuppini's is today preserved in no fewer than twelve manuscript copies, Giustiniani's in twenty eight, and Castiglionchio's in thirteen; see G u a l d o R o s a, *op. cit.* (19), 295-297.

²² G u a l d o R o s a, *op. cit.* (19), 297-299.

²³ G u a l d o R o s a, *op. cit.* (19), 284.

²⁴ G u a l d o R o s a, *op. cit.* (20); G u a l d o R o s a, *op. cit.* (2), 28-31, 41, 67-68.

a similar method of reuse in the case of Nicholas' translations, and if so, on which earlier versions the bishop's work is based. We can start with his translation of *To Nicocles*, and see how the opening passage was translated in comparison to Marsuppini, Giustiniani and Castiglionchio.²⁵

Nicholas of Modruš

Qui vobis regibus offerre consueverunt aut vestes aut aurichalcum aut aurum elaboratum aut aliud quippiam quae possidentur, quibus vos abundatis, illi autem indigent, o Nicocles, admodum mihi manifeste non munerum sed mercaturae potius officia exercere videntur, ac multo quidem artificiosius quaestum quaerere atque illi cauponariam profitentur. Ego vero existimavi illius generis munus fore honestissimum, utilissimum decentissimumque et mihi dare et tibi accipere, si possem recte determinare quas te decet exercitationes affectare et quibus abstinere operibus, quave ratione civitatem et regnum optime gubernare.

Carlo Marsuppini (1430)

Homines qui vobis regibus, o Nicocles, vestes vel aes vel aurum laboratum vel aliud quiddam eiusmodi dare consueverunt, quibus ipsi indigent, vos autem abundatis, apertissime mihi videntur non donum, sed mercaturam facere voluisse multoque artificiosius callidiusque ea vendere quam ii, qui id agere profitentur. At ego hoc honestissimum ac utilissimum mihi que ad tradendum tibi que ad sumendum decentissimum donum fore putavi, si diffinire possem quae tu studia appetens quibusque ab operibus abstinens optime cum civitatem tum regnum gubernares.

Bernardo Giustiniani (1431)

Consueverunt plerique, o Nicocles, aurum caelatum, pretiosam suppellectilem ceteraque id genus dono vobis regibus dare, quarum rerum indigent ipsi, ita apud vos magna copia est. Hi mihi plane videntur non tam donare quam sperata quadam commutatione astute callideque mercari uobiscum, idque vel apertius facere quam eos ipsos qui mercaturam publice profitentur. Ego autem, quum mecum cogitarem quid ad te potissimum muneris mitterem, nihil profecto honestius videbatur aut utilius quodve utrumque nostrum deceret magis, et me qui darem et te qui acciperes, quam definire quibus institutis ac artibus civitatem possis regnumque tuum pulcherrime gubernare.

²⁵ The opening passages of the *To Nicocles* translations are quoted from G u a l d o R o s a, *op. cit.* (19), 281-282.

Lapo da Castiglionchio the Younger (1436)

Qui vobis regibus, Nicocles, soliti sunt vestes aut aes aut aurum pulcherrime laboratum aut aliquid eiusmodi aliud elargiri, quorum ipsi indigent, vos in primis abundatis, ii mihi non munus dare sed perspicue mercaturam exercere videntur, ac ea multo artificiosius vendere quam qui quaestuosas artes profitentur. Ego vero existimavi munus pulcherrimum utilissimumque fore et quod danti mihi et tibi accipienti maxime conveniret, si definire possem quibus studiis atque artibus instructus quibusque declinatis rebus optime et ciuitatem et regnum constituere possis.

When set against the three widely available translations of *To Nicocles*, it immediately becomes clear that Giustiniani's, which is rather free, was not used by Nicholas. On the other hand, it is also clear his translation shows clear parallels with those of Marsuppini and Castiglionchio, who, as was mentioned, himself relied on Marsuppini. That Nicholas also relied on the former rather than the latter is clear from his groupings of superlatives *honestissimum*, *utilissimum* *decentissimumque* which were all used by Marsuppini (though Nicholas simplifies the line). Moreover, while Lapo slightly changed the meaning of the text by using *constituere* in the final line, Nicholas kept Marsuppini's *gubernare*. Indebtedness to Marsuppini is most clear in *quibus ipsi indigent, vos autem abundatis*, which the bishop merely reversed (the only translator to alter the sequence of the original in such a way), without doubt in order to distance himself from his source. Indeed, this distancing led him to some solutions that affected the quality of his translation, such as his decision to move the vocative *o Nicocles* further down the sentence, or using rather rare words like *aurichalcum* and *cauponariam*.²⁶

If we turn to Nicholas' translation of *To Demonicus*, and compare it with those of Guarino, Castiglionchio, Loschi and Perleone, we find a similar situation:²⁷

Nicholas of Modruš

Multis in rebus, Demonicus, multum distantes invenimus studiosorum sententias ac pravorum cogitationes, praecipue autem maximam suis in consuetudinibus differentiam acceperunt; hi enim tantum praesentes venerantur amicos, illi autem etiam longe positos diligunt, et pravorum consuetudines exiguum tempus dissolvit, studiosorum vero amicitias neque universum aevum abolere potest.

²⁶ One can also add that in the dedicatory letter (16-17) Nicholas draws attention to the teacher-student connection between Aristotle and Alexander the Great, which had been invoked earlier by Marsuppini as well.

²⁷ The opening passages of the *To Demonicus* translations are quoted from G u a l d o R o s a, *op. cit.* (20), 846-847.

Guarino Guarini (1407)

In multis equidem, Demonice, comperiemus distantes admodum et proborum mentes improborumque sententias; permaximam vero in mutuis eorum consortiis differentiam acceperere; hii siquidem presentes dumtaxat honore colunt, at illi et procul absentes amore prosequuntur; improborum quoque sodalitates tempus dissolvit exiguum, at virorum amicitias idoneorum nec cuncta quidem deletura sunt saecula.

Lapo da Castiglionchio the Younger (1436)

Cum in aliis permultis bonorum atque improborum sententias et opiniones inter se differre, Demonice, licet intueri, tum in usu vitae et consuetudine maxime dissidere; hi enim praesentes tantum observant et diligunt, illi etiam absentium cum benivolentia memoriam servant; ac improborum consuetudines perbrevis tempore dissolvuntur, at bonorum amicitias ne vetustas quidem omnium saeculorum abolere potest.

Niccolò Loschi (ca. 1437)

Pluribus quidem in rebus, o Demonice, valde differentes proborum sententias et iniquorum cogitationes invenimus, multo vero maxime in eorum amicitias mutuis differre consueverunt. Hii enim presentes solum amicos colunt, at illi et longe quidem absentes benivolentia prosequuntur; improborum quoque consuetudines parvo admodum tempore dissolvuntur, cum bonorum amicitias nec omne quidem tempus delere queat.

Pietro Perleone (1446/1452)

Multis quidem in rebus, o Demonice, sed in primis in mutua consuetudine ac familiaritate, reperiemus bonos et malos multum inuicem sententia cogitationeque differre. Alteri enim presentes tantum colunt amicos, alteri uero etiam longe absentes magna cum benivolentia complectuntur; atque malorum consuetudinem perbreve tempus dissolvere, bonorum autem nec ulla quidem aetas abolere potest.

Again, as in the case of *To Nicocles*, Nicholas seems to have relied on an existing translation, this time that of Niccolò Loschi, which may be somewhat surprising given the fact that among popular versions it had the most limited circulation. The reliance on Loschi is strikingly apparent in the opening sentence, where Nicholas follows the same syntactical organization as that of his template, resorting only to synonyms to distance himself from his model. *Pluribus quidem in rebus* thus becomes *Multis in rebus*; *valde differentes* - *multum distantes*, gnomic future *inveniemus* - gnomic present *invenimus*; *proborum* - *studiosorum*;

iniquorum - pravorum; and though he originally kept the *o* interjection before *Demonice*, he cancelled it while revising.

The comparison of opening passages shows that Nicholas, much like his contemporaries, heavily relied on the previous translations of the two texts, and the pattern illustrated here – with the bishop consistently introducing variations at either a syntactical or a lexical level – continues throughout. Whether Nicholas used the Greek original at all, or was merely adapting an earlier translation (or even conflating several of them), can be shown only by a systematic analysis of the texts, which exceeds the scope of the present work. What matters for the present argument is that the bishop was the author of the Corsinian translations, although in producing them he heavily relied on earlier texts, Marsuppini's in the case of *To Nicocles* and Loschi's in the case of *To Demonicus*.

3. The Question of Dedication: Identifying the Dedicatee

The missing *tituli* in the Corsinian manuscript have so far not only posed problems when discussing authorship, but have also thwarted the identification of the dedicatee of *To Nicocles*. To find candidates for this role one is forced to sift through the dedicatory letter and set the portrayed figure in relation to the bishop's contacts. Therefore, before proceeding, it is important to give a brief overview of his career, focusing in particular on the years when the translations were made. Taking into consideration Rollo's remarks concerning the bishop's efforts to master the Greek language, this period can be roughly dated between early 1467 and the bishop's death in 1480.²⁸

Nicholas' career falls into two distinct phases. The first is marked by rapid advancement in his career in Croatia under the patronage of Stephen Frankapan, lord of Modruš, and later at the Hungarian court, but also by no less bitter disappointments in the winter of 1464, when King Mathias Corvinus banished him for involving himself in political intrigues.²⁹ The second phase corresponds to his career at the papal curia, or more precisely in the provinces of the Papal States. Under Pope Paul II (1464-1471) Nicholas gradually rose from his initial post as castellan of Viterbo (mid 1464-late 1467) to more prestigious duties, acting as governor of Ascoli (early 1468-late 1470), and Fano and Senigallia (late 1470-late

²⁸ For Nicholas' appointments in the papal provinces, see M e r c a t i, *op. cit.* (3).

²⁹ For Nicholas' career in Croatia, see Luka Š p o l j a r i ć, »Nikola Modruški *avant la lettre*: Društveno podrijetlo, akademski put i počeci crkvene karijere (uz prilog o slučaju živog mrtvaca u Senju)« [Nicholas of Modruš *avant la lettre*: His social background, academic path and early ecclesiastical career (with an appendix on the case of a revenant in Senj)], *Povijesni prilozi* 46 (2014): 69-94. For his contacts with the Hungarian court, including the episode involving his banishment from the kingdom, see Š p o l j a r i ć, *op. cit.* (1), 1-41.

1471). The pontificate of Sixtus IV (1471-1484) brought even more important offices and closer contacts with the highest echelons of the curia. After spending 1472 with an anti-Ottoman naval expedition in the Aegean, he first seems to have lived in Rome as *familiaris* in the household of Cardinal Pietro Riario, Pope Sixtus' favorite nephew, during 1473. Not long after the cardinal died in January 1474, Nicholas returned to the governorship in Fano, only to be transferred to Spoleto the following year. Finally, in 1478, he was appointed vice-legate in Perugia with nearly all of Umbria under his control. Having stayed in Perugia well into 1479, Nicholas died in mid 1480 as Pope Sixtus' *familiaris*.

It will be useful to quote the dedicatory letter in full:

During the past days I learned from your envoys – truly exceptional men deserving of your company and closely tied to me by bonds of friendship – of a great many feats that bear witness to your talents, how worthy are the foundations you have so far laid to your young reign, and how much more glorious are those heralded by your ripening virtue. Consequently, I became hopeful that you would turn out to equal the very greatest of rulers, should you indeed join your innate goodness with the cultivation of letters, and should the fertile soil of your character be tilled with a hoe of liberal education. You see, if sprouts would grow without lopping, no matter how exceptional they may be, on their own they would always bear that what does not become them, and would from overindulgence grow weaker in this very process. So are olives, so are vines, so are crops accustomed to growing rapidly without the farmer's assistance but instead of desired fruits producing barren leaves. Indeed, those plants that are subjected to a skillful sickle yield fruits that appear grander to the eye and dearer to the taste. Gold too, and all sorts of gems, however noble they may grow on their own, become much more noble, more elegant, more worthy, more illustrious and more precious in a craftsman's hands. I leave out dogs, horses, birds and other living creatures, which usually benefit from training so much that sometimes they seem to challenge humans in the use of reason.

It can be clear from this how much effort all mortals should put into pursuing and embracing learning. If education brings such great advantages and honor to brute and insentient beings, how much more should it bring to humans, whom nature herself made fit for learning in particular, and whose minds she inspired more than that of any other living thing, so that they may devote themselves to this work and pursue it with more ease. Although all mortals who do not want to be counted among the uncultured have to educate themselves, this is particularly valid for those who govern or reign over others. It is preposterous and most unseemly for the unwise to rule over the wise and the imprudent over the prudent. Wouldn't you be right to laugh if you saw the blind leading the seeing, or the peasant issuing laws of

the state to the citizen? It is truly no less absurd and unbecoming to see the reins of government in the hands of an imprudent governor. Right are all those princes who commit to the attention of the wise those affairs that they want to be carried out efficiently, but they would be even more right if they obtained for themselves that which they desire from others, and if they made an effort to appear superior in character to those over whom they were put in charge by fortune. An imprudent and uneducated person is, according to the Philosopher's testimony, by nature slave to the prudent and the educated. Hence he who disdains learning judges himself unworthy of rule, and as he solicits the services of the educated whose learning he spurned and despised, he himself condemns his own stupidity. It is precisely this thought that Philip, the famous king of the Macedonians, declared to have understood well in that letter which he wrote to Aristotle after his son Alexander was born. Invoking the gods as his witnesses, he said that he was not so happy about the fact that he had a son born as he was happy that the son was born at the time during which such a distinguished philosopher could give him the best education. Without doubt Alexander received such an education, so much so that later he himself both in his letters and his orations often admitted that he valued more the learning he acquired under Aristotle's tutorship than his sway over the entire world.

Indeed, it is more remarkable to win over men with wisdom than with power, equally as it is more excellent for men to use wisdom in subduing other living creatures. Truly, what can be more desirable or divine than to be superior over men in that in which men themselves are superior to other living beings? Moreover, along with this honor accorded to education come great and excellent benefits, no less necessary to those in power than they are useful. For it is from here that most sound and infallible plans originate, from here that firm decisions and just verdicts are brought forth, from here that all public and private education is drawn. And so that you may realize that you yourself already possess these, listen for a moment to Wisdom herself as she offers advice and promises: *Choose instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her. I, Wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have insight, I have power: by me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just; by me princes govern, and nobles - all who rule on earth. I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. My fruit is better than gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me and making their treasuries full.*

This being the case, and as I was delighted by and had confidence in your talent, I wanted to encourage you to seize riches of this sort. And so that you may acquire such riches more easily, I wanted to instruct you not with my own precepts but rather with those of Isocrates, an exceptionally wise and eloquent man, not only because by dying a long time ago he escaped the gnawing of haters, and thus by the passing of time and by prudent and elegant thoughts secured great authority for himself; but also because foreign riches, though sometimes inferior to one's own, are nonetheless held in higher regard. He was a Greek by nation, distinguished not so much among the rhetoricians as he was among the philosophers. He left many remarkable testaments to his wisdom and eloquence: among other, the *Royal Education of Life* for Nicocles king of Sicily, which I have translated into Latin. I have expressed his simple and unadorned sentences with simple and unadorned words, so that by embellishments I do not violate their original directness. It will be a sign of your culture to kindly accept this gift of mine, and a sign of your moral worth to use it appropriately according to your circumstances and our intention.³⁰

Apart from giving us some sense of Nicholas' educational ideals, which equally draw on the classics and the Bible, the letter allows us to gain a glimpse into the figure of the unnamed dedicatee. To start with, he was a young lord (of »ripening virtue«, *pubescens virtus*) who recently began to rule (as testified by the reference to his »young reign«, *iuvenis principatus*). As far as vague references to the »great many feats« (*multa praeclara facinora*) and »worthy foundations« (*digna fundamenta*) go, we can probably interpret them as courteous praise required by the form of the dedicatory letter. On the other hand, the fact that Nicholas entertained the envoys of the said prince (»I learned from your envoys«, *ab oratoribus tuis didicissem*) indicates that we can narrow the dating of the *To Nicocles* to the period after the bishop rose to the gubernatorial rank in 1468. It also suggests that the translation was not only a gift that aimed to secure favor for Nicholas personally but also one that was used in a *diplomatic* setting. This is, after all, indicated by the rhetorical *ethos* Nicholas assumes; he approaches the dedicatee not as a subordinate, as he had approached John Vitez, Stephen Várdai and Marco Barbo, the dedicatees of his earlier works, but as a senior peer advising a young fellow administrator »not with [his] own precepts« (*non meis praeceptionibus*), that is to say not according to his own experience from governing a city, »but rather with those of Isocrates« (*sed potius Isocratis*). Consequently, the young lord must have enjoyed cordial relations with the pope, for it is inconceivable that a papal governor or a diplomat that was loyal to the curia as was Nicholas would have maintained close ties with a prince whose rule was not approved by the pope. Yet, the most peculiar part of the letter is the title that Nicholas ascribes to Nicocles,

³⁰ See the edition of the letter in the appendix.

the addressee of Isocrates' oration, presented here not as *rex Salaminae* but as *rex Siciliae*, king of Sicily. This identification, which Lucia Gualdo Rosa chose to correct in her edition of the preface to *rex Salaminae*,³¹ was not a scribal error: the text of the translation was, as we saw, emended by Nicholas, and he would have hardly missed such a scribal blunder in the closing of the dedicatory letter. On the other hand, it was not a matter of ignorance, as earlier translators of *To Nicocles* had correctly identified Isocrates' addressee either as the king of Salamis, or generally as the king of Cyprus, as was the case with Giustiniani, Rinuccini, and in particular with Marsuppini, whose translation, as we saw, Nicholas must have had before him.³² Identification of Nicocles as *rex Siciliae* represented, therefore, a deliberate manipulation of historical facts on Nicholas' part.

If we search for a prince that could fit this description, and at the same time would have come into contact with Nicholas, a number of possible choices seem to present themselves. Given Nicholas' governorships in the provinces, the *signori* of Romagna and Marche first come to mind. However, Carlo Manfredi, who in 1468 succeeded his father Astore as lord of Faenza at the age of twenty nine, seems too old,³³ as does, even more so, Pino III Ordelaffi, who was thirty when he took control of Forlì from his brother Francesco in 1466.³⁴ Similar is the case of Roberto Malatesta who wrested Rimini from his stepbrother Sallustio and their late father's former lover, Isotta degli Atti, in 1468 at the age of twenty-seven.³⁵ Apart from the age issue, it also seems unlikely that in 1468 and 1469, while he was governing Ascoli in the southern Marche, Nicholas would have had business with or needed to win the favor of two petty lords of Romagna some 250 kilometers away.

An important clue to identifying the young prince seems to be the deliberate misrepresentation of Nicocles as king of Sicily. Nicocles could have been

³¹ Gualdo Rosa, *op. cit.* (2), 194.

³² Giustiniani's translation with the dedicatory letter was published in Venice in 1492 in a volume of his *Orationes et epistulae* and is available online at <http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/~db/0005/bsb00054740/images/>; last accessed 15 December 2014. For Rinuccini's dedicatory letter to Alfonso, see Alamanno Rinuccini, *Lettere ed orazioni*, Florence, 1953, 72-74; for Marsuppini's, see Tommaso Kaeppli, »Le traduzioni umanistiche di Isocrate e una lettera dedicatoria di Carlo Marsuppini a Galeotto Roberto Malatesta (1430)«, *Studi Romagnoli* 2 (1951), 57-65 (64).

³³ Isabella Lazzerini, »Manfredi, Carlo,« in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (henceforth DBI), vol. 68 (2007) (available at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/carlo-manfredi_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/carlo-manfredi_(Dizionario_Biografico)/); last accessed 15 December 2014).

³⁴ For Pino III Ordelaffi, see Alma Piloni, »Ordelaffi, Pino«, DBI, vol. 79 (2013) (available at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pino-ordelaffi_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pino-ordelaffi_(Dizionario_Biografico)/); last accessed 15 December 2014).

³⁵ For Roberto Malatesta, see Anna Falconi, »Malatesta, Roberto detto Roberto il Magnifico«, DBI, vol. 68 (2007) (available at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/roberto-detto-roberto-il-magnifico-malatesta_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/roberto-detto-roberto-il-magnifico-malatesta_(Dizionario-Biografico)/); last accessed 15 December 2014); and P. J. Jones, *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State: A Political History*, Cambridge, 1974, 240-251.

retitled to appeal to Alfonso duke of Calabria, the firstborn son and heir of Ferrante I, who, though by modern historiographical convention is now called king of Naples, officially held the title of *rex Siciliae*.³⁶ An opportunity to present the crown prince with the translation would have arisen in December of 1472, when Alfonso turned twenty-four, and when we find Nicholas at the Neapolitan court freshly arrived from the naval expedition against the Ottomans in the Aegean.³⁷ After all, *To Nicocles* was a suitable gift for the crown prince of the Neapolitan kingdom, as is clear from Alamanno Rinuccini's translation of the text dedicated to Federico da Montefeltro, but originally intended precisely for the *illustrissimus princeps Alphonsus dux Calabriae*. The problem, however, is that while in his unused dedicatory letter Rinuccini imagines Isocrates' precepts would serve the duke »when one day he becomes the king of the greatest and most beautiful kingdom«, Nicholas presents an autonomous young ruler of a *principatus*, making no reference to the dedicatee being a crown prince.³⁸ Furthermore, it seems difficult to imagine that Nicholas would have felt the need to legitimize the value of liberal education to someone who had been tutored from his earliest days by humanists of such distinction as Antonio Beccadelli and Giovanni Gioviano Pontano.

Another possible candidate would be Costanzo Sforza, who in April of 1473, at twenty-six, succeeded his father Alessandro as lord of Pesaro, a city a mere 15 kilometers away from Fano where the bishop returned as governor in 1474.³⁹ The identification of Nicocles as king of Sicily would have played to Costanzo's ear as well. On 9 June 1474 the lord of Pesaro agreed a marriage contract with the Neapolitan court according to which he would marry the niece of King Ferrante, Camilla Marzano d'Aragona. Moreover, on this occasion Costanzo was adopted by Ferrante and allowed to style himself from this point on as Costanzo Sforza d'Aragona. Yet, again, as in the case of Duke Alfonso, there would have hardly been a need for Nicholas to legitimize liberal education to Costanzo who

³⁶ For Alfonso duke of Calabria and later king of Naples, see Raffaella M o r m o n e, »Alfonso II d' Aragona, re di Napoli«, DBI, vol. 2 (1960) (available at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alfonso-ii-d-aragona-re-di-napoli_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alfonso-ii-d-aragona-re-di-napoli_(Dizionario_Biografico)/); last accessed 15 December 2014).

³⁷ M e r c a t i, *op. cit.* (3), 225-227; for the document that places Nicholas at the Neapolitan court, see Gigi C o r a z z o l (ed.), *Dispacci di Zaccaria Barbaro*, Rome, 1994, 475 (doc. 221).

³⁸ R i n u c c i n i, *op. cit.* (32), 73: *Maxime autem conuenire sum arbitratus de gubernando regno praecepta ad te mittere, qui antiquissimum genus a regibus ducens, sub clarissimis regibus auo patreque educatus, amplissimi pulcherrimique regni rex esses aliquando futurus, ut iustitiam, fortitudinem, magnanimitatem, modestiam, liberalitatem, beneficentiam, sicut actionibus assequeris, ita etiam legendo recognoscas.*

³⁹ For Alessandro Sforza, see Francesco A m b r o g i a n i, *La vita di Costanzo Sforza*, Pesaro, 2003; and the short overview in Jane B r i d g e m a n, *A Renaissance Wedding: The Celebrations at Pesaro for the Marriage of Costanzo Sforza & Camilla Marzano d'Aragona 26-30 May 1475*, London, 2013, 20-27.

was taught by Matteo Collenuccio da Sassoferrato and Martino Filetico, students of two of the foremost humanist educators of early Quattrocento Italy, Vittorino da Feltre and Guarino Guarini respectively.⁴⁰ A further problem with identifying the dedicatee as Costanzo Sforza is the same as with Manfredi, Ordelaffi, and Malatesta. While all of the them were young lords, in their late twenties at those points of their lives when they could have been presented with Nicholas' translation of *To Nicocles*, the youth of *pubescens virtus* who needs to be convinced of the value of liberal education rather seems to suggest a ruler who was installed in power at an even younger age.

One such ruler who enjoyed close relations with the Neapolitan court and styled himself as d' Aragona was Iacopo IV Appiani d' Aragona, who was fifteen when in 1474 he became lord of Piombino in southern Tuscany. While it is improbable that Nicholas would have come into diplomatic contact with a petty lord in western Tuscany while governor of Spoleto, in 1479 Appiani participated in the papal-Neapolitan war against Florence as a *condottiere* in the Neapolitan army, where he would have had a chance to encounter Nicholas acting as the papal vice-legate in Perugia.⁴¹ The dedicatory letter, however, does not make any reference to the war, which dominated much of the Italian political discourse from mid-1478 until mid-1480, nor does it present the dedicatee as a *condottiere*, but rather advises him to embrace liberal studies in order to govern his territories effectively. Also, it is difficult to imagine that Nicholas, who dedicated his works exclusively to figures that were able to advance his career or were closely connected to circles of power, would have, as a papal vice-legate in Perugia, dedicated a work to a petty lord serving as a captain in the Neapolitan army.

If we take into consideration the bishop's contacts outside Italy, the name of Bernardin Frankapan might be suggested. Bernardin was heir and co-ruler of Stephen Frankapan of Modruš, Nicholas' patron in the beginnings of his church career.⁴² In 1476, at the age of twenty-three, Bernardin took part in the Hungarian royal retinue that was sent to Naples to escort King Ferrante's daughter Beatrice to Buda, where she was supposed to marry King Matthias.⁴³ Yet, while in Naples, King Ferrante married Bernardin to one of his nieces, Luisa Marzano d' Aragona (the sister of Costanzo Sforza's Camilla), drawing thus the lords of Modruš into the Neapolitan political orbit. The Sicilian identification of Nicocles would therefore seem appropriate to Bernardin as well. Nicholas' letter to the clergy of Modruš,

⁴⁰ B r i d g e m a n, *op. cit.* (39), 21.

⁴¹ For Iacopo IV Appiani, see Piero P i e r i, »Appiani, Iacopo«, DBI, vol. 3 (1961) (available at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/iacopo-appiani_res-9aa4784f-87e6-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/iacopo-appiani_res-9aa4784f-87e6-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_(Dizionario-Biografico)/); last accessed 15 December 2014).

⁴² For Bernardin Frankapan, see Milan K r u h e k, »Bernardin Frankopan krčki, senjski i modruški knez – posljednji modruški Europejac hrvatskoga srednjovjekovlja, 1453.-1529.« [Bernardin Frankopan count of Krk, Senj, Modruš - The last Modruš European of the Croatian Middle Ages (1453-1529)], *Modruški zbornik* 3 (2009), 187-235.

⁴³ K r u h e k, *op. cit.* (42), 194-195.

dated to 1476/1477, reveals that the bishop remained in contact with his bishopric, and if Bernardin was the unnamed dedicatee of the translation, it could probably be dated to the same period. Although he was no humanist, Bernardin was well educated; he would later deliver orations on diplomatic missions as envoy of the Croatian Diet (one of which, the *Oratio pro Croatia*, he had printed in Nürnberg in 1522), and would be the dedicatee of the oration delivered and printed in 1513 in Rome by Šimun Kožičić Benja, one of Nicholas' successors as bishop of Modruš.⁴⁴ The problem, however, is that the dedicatory letter of *To Nicocles* makes no mention of the dedicatee's father but presents him as the sole ruler of his *principatus*, while the documentary evidence from Croatia suggest that Stephen still had the last word in the family affairs.⁴⁵ Moreover, the envoys mentioned in the dedicatory letter would have hardly needed to present Bernardin's talents to Nicholas, who himself must have had regular contact with the young heir in Modruš before he left to pursue a career at the papal curia.

In the end, the prince who most fits the description of the dedicatee as a young ruler who had only recently risen to power, and would have had contact with Nicholas, is Giovanni della Rovere, the nephew of Pope Sixtus IV. Giovanni came to Rome when his uncle ascended to the papal throne, and was only seventeen when in 1474 he was betrothed to Giovanna, the daughter of Federico da Montefeltro, and was made lord of Senigallia and Mondavio.⁴⁶ In this case as well, the identification of Nicocles as king of Sicily would have enhanced appeal of the text, since in November of 1475, Giovanni was, owing to the good relations between Sixtus' curia and the Neapolitan court, also adopted by King Ferrante and named duke of Arce and Sora, becoming thus part of the »Sicilian«, i.e. the Neapolitan, nobility.⁴⁷ Moreover, the following month, Sixtus also appointed Giovanni della Rovere prefect of Rome with a residence next to the church of San Pietro in Vincoli, on which occasion the Roman humanist (and Nicholas' acquaintance) Domizio Calderini delivered a panegyric praising the qualities, recent achievements, and the Aragonese adoption of this *adolescens*, while no

⁴⁴ For Bernardin's oration, see Bernardin Frankapan Modruški, *Oratio pro Croatia: Govor za Hrvatsku (1522.)* [*Oratio pro Croatia: Oration for Croatia (1522)*], Modruš, 2010; for the oration of Benja, see Branimir Glavičić (ed.), »*Simonis Begnii, Episcopi Modrusiensis Oratio in Sexta Lateranensis Concilii Sessione quinto Kalendas Maias Habita MDXIII*«, *Zbornik radova o Šimunu Kožičiću Benji* [Papers on Šimun Kožičić Benja] (ed. Nikica Kolumbić, Milan Moguš and Anica Nazor), Zagreb, 1991, 211-219.

⁴⁵ Kruhek, *op. cit.* (42), 196.

⁴⁶ Franca Petrucci, »Della Rovere, Giovanni«, *DBI*, vol. 37 (1989) (available at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-della-rovere_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-della-rovere_(Dizionario-Biografico)/); last accessed 15 December 2014).

⁴⁷ Giovanni succeeded his deceased brother Leonardo on these positions; see Paolo Cherubini, »Della Rovere, Leonardo«, *DBI*, vol. 37 (1989) (available at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leonardo-della-rovere_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leonardo-della-rovere_(Dizionario-Biografico)/); last accessed 15 December 2014).

mention was made of any exceptional education he might have received by that time.⁴⁸ More importantly, during these years Giovanni was presented with an anonymous Italian translation of *To Nicocles*, which had been, as Gualdo Rosa showed, adapted from the aforementioned Latin translation of Fra Girolamo.⁴⁹ If Giovanni was also the unnamed dedicatee of Nicholas' Latin translation of the work, as the circumstantial evidence suggests, the dedication should be dated to the early years of his rule and before the outbreak of the Pazzi war, that is to say to 1476 or 1477, when Nicholas was governor of Spoleto. In establishing communication between his base in Rome and his territories in the duchy of Arce and Sora and in Senigallia, Giovanni's envoys would have had to travel through the city under Nicholas' administration, which lay on the main line of communication between Rome and the Marche. While it thus may have been used as a diplomatic gift, one sent from the former to the current governor of Senigallia, the translation would have also served Nicholas in further strengthening his ties to Sixtus' curia by connecting him to an increasingly important member of the pope's family. Therefore, all possibilities considered, it seems that we should interpret the translation in the same context with Nicholas' funeral oration for Pietro Riario and the deliberative oration addressed to the eighteen-year-old Raffaele Sansoni Riario, two cardinal nephews of Sixtus IV, which present the bishop as a prelate closely connected to the della Rovere curia.

4. Conclusions

The present article has attempted to answer three questions concerning the translations of Isocrates' orations preserved in the MS Corsin 43.E.3.

First, these translations should no longer be counted among Nicholas of Modruš's *dubia* but among the *certa*. The conclusion is based on Nicholas' interventions in the manuscript (unnoticed by previous scholars), which include not only emendations of scribal mistakes but stylistic revisions of the text as well.

Second, in spite of the fact that the bishop made an effort to learn Greek possibly as early as the autumn of 1466, the comparison of the opening passages of the translations shows that he heavily relied on the earlier versions of Carlo Marsuppini (in case of *To Nicocles*), and Niccolò Loschi (in case of *To Demonicus*). A more thorough comparative analysis of the versions should take into consideration the variant readings of the numerous preserved codices of the earlier translations, which are still not available in critical editions. Such an approach might answer the question of whether the bishop had the Greek original before him at all or whether he conflated several other translations widely available at the time.

⁴⁸ For the text of the panegyric, see Egmont Lee, *Sixtus IV and Men of Letters*, Rome, 1978, 213-217.

⁴⁹ Gualdo Rosa, *op. cit.* (2), 49-51.

Third, while some definite answers can be put forward when it comes to questions of authorship and the sources on which Nicholas relied, things are not so simple when one tries to establish the context of their publication. For although preserved in a single manuscript that belonged to Nicholas' personal library, the two translations were certainly composed as separate projects. Judging from the deliberate manipulations of the text, *To Demonicus* was also, if not published, at least intended for publication. As far as the identity of the young unnamed dedicatee of *To Nicocles* is concerned, we are lent a helping hand by Nicholas' decision to misrepresent Nicocles as king of Sicily rather than king of Cyprus or Salamis (as he had been correctly identified by all previous humanist translators of the text, including Marsuppini whose version Nicholas had before him). This seems to have been motivated by a desire to make the text more appealing to the dedicatee, given that in contemporary usage *Regnum Siciliae* was the official name of the Neapolitan kingdom. Having considered a number of possible young princes who were politically associated with the kingdom and at the same time enjoyed contacts with Nicholas, it seems that the translation was most likely dedicated to Giovanni della Rovere d' Aragona, the young nephew of Pope Sixtus IV, Duke of Arce and Sora, Lord of Senigallia and prefect of Rome, and that the dedicatory letter was composed probably in 1476/77, when the bishop served as governor of Spoleto. Without more evidence, however, this remains only a probable conjecture.

Whatever the case may be, the Latin translations of Isocrates' *To Nicocles* and *To Demonicus* certainly represent valuable testaments not only to Nicholas of Modruš's intellectual interests and, one might say, to the way he sought to present himself among his peers, but also to his activities as a governor in the provinces of the Papal States, a part of his career that has so far received little attention in scholarship.