

# *Insinuatio* and Paul's Areopagus Speech in Acts 17:22-31

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# Introduction

- The Claim
  - Scholars claim Paul uses *insinuatio* in Acts 17:22-31.
- The Problem
  - Scholars cite secondary sources at the expense of primary sources.
  - Scholars treat *insinuatio* as monolithic.
- The Solution
  - A comprehensive, close reading of the Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks.
  - Demonstrate the many types of *insinuatio*.
- The Goal
  - Ascertain the exact type of *insinuatio* in Acts 17:22-31.

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Greek Rhetorical Handbooks
  - *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, (Anaximenes, ca. 340 B.C.)
  - *Rhetorica* (Aristotle, ca. 330 B.C.)
- Roman Rhetorical Handbooks
  - *De Inventione* (Cicero, ca. 91-85 B.C.)
  - *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (Cornificus, ca. 86-82 B.C.)
  - *Institutio Oratoria* (Quintilian, ca. A.D. 91-100)

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Greek Rhetorical Theory
  - Anaximenes, *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (ca. 340 B.C.)
  - *Rhet. Alex.* 29
    - 3 audiences:
      - “kindly disposed, or hostile, or neither good nor bad.”
      - 1 and 3 don’t require much; but 2 requires the orator to address the prejudice.
    - 3 sources of prejudice:
      - Against the speaker.
      - Against the subject.
      - Against the speech.
    - 2 approaches
      - Direct for indifferent and unprejudiced audiences.
      - Indirect for prejudiced audiences (address prejudice upfront).

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Greek Rhetorical Theory

- Aristotle, *Rhetorica* (ca. 330 B.C.)

- *Rhet.* 3.14

- The purpose of *exordia*: to arouse prejudice or remove prejudice.

- *Rhet.* 3.15

- Nine methods for removing prejudice.

- Clear oneself from disagreeable suspicion (3.15.1)

- Contest the disputed points (3.15.2)

- Say that it was a case of error, misfortune, or necessity (3.15.3)

- If the accuser or his relative has a similar charge (3.15.4)

- If others involved were not charged (3.15.5)

- If the accuser or others had the same charge and were innocent (3.15.6)

- Counter-attack the accuser, thus discrediting him (3.15.7)

- Appeal to a verdict already given (3.15.8)

- Attack slander: it is evil (3.15.9)

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Summary of Greek Rhetorical Theory on *Insinuatio*
  - Approach prejudice head on.
  - Remove prejudice at the outset.
  - Greeks place addressing prejudice at the beginning of the speech = Greek *insinuatio*.

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Roman Rhetorical Theory
  - Cicero, *De Inventione* (ca. 91-85 B.C.)
  - *Inv.* 1.15.20
    - Five kinds of cases
      - Honorable
      - Difficult
      - Mean
      - Ambiguous
      - Obscure
    - Two kinds of *exordia*
      - *Principium* [direct approach]
        - ☞ For honorable, mean, ambiguous, and obscure cases.
      - *Insinuatio* [subtle approach]
        - ☞ For a difficult case.

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Roman Rhetorical Theory
  - Cicero, *De Inventione* (ca. 91-85 B.C.)
  - *Inv.* 1.17
    - Three causes of hostility
      - A scandalous case
      - A convinced, won over, persuaded audience
      - A wearied, tired audience

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Roman Rhetorical Theory
  - Cornificus, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (ca. 86-82 B.C.)
  - *Rhet. Her.* 1.4.6
    - Two kinds of *exordia*
      - *Principium* [direct opening]
        - For doubtful, petty, and honorable cases.
      - *Insinuatio* [subtle approach]
        - For discreditable cases.
  - *Rhet. Her.* 1.6
    - Three occasions for *insinuatio*
      - A discreditable case
      - A won over audience
      - A wearied audience

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Roman Rhetorical Theory
  - Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (ca. A.D. 91-100)
  - *Inst.* 4.1.25
    - Delay bringing up the “naked harshness.”
  - *Inst.* 4.1.42-50
    - Three kinds of cases
      - Discreditable case
      - Disgraceful subject
      - Handicapping outward circumstances

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Roman Rhetorical Theory
  - Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (ca. A.D. 91-100)
  - *Inst.* 4.1.44-45a
    - Four ways to bolster the case
      - The character of client
      - The nature of the case
      - Attack the opponent
      - If unable to deny the scandalous facts...five options
  - *Inst.* 4.1.48-50
    - Two occasions for *insinuatio*.
      - Persuaded, convinced, won-over audience
      - Tired, wearied audience

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Summary of Roman Rhetorical Theory on *Insinuatio*
  - Approach prejudice subtly, indirectly.
  - Remove prejudice at the end of the speech.
  - In the beginning and middle parts, the scandalous parts must be avoided.
  - The beginning and middle parts function as a buttering up.
  - Romans place addressing prejudice at the end of the speech = Roman *insinuatio*.
  - Romans also add two other categories of *insinuatio*, i.e. for persuaded and tired audiences.
  - Three total types of Roman *insinuatio*: (1) scandalous case, (2) persuaded audience, and (3) tired audience.

# *Insinuatio* in the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Handbooks

- Conclusions
  - Greeks addressed prejudice at the inception; Romans at the culmination.
  - Two other kinds of Roman *insinuatio* (Roman) are for a persuaded audience and a tired audience.
  - *Insinuatio* was not monolithic.
    - 1 Greek rendition.
    - 3 Roman gradations.
  - 4 types of *insinuatio* in Greco-Roman rhetorical theory.
  - Which type is used in Acts 17:22-31?

# *Insinuatio* in Acts 17:22-31

- *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (Anaximenes)
  - Paul faced a hostile audience
  - Prejudice is against Paul's subject – repentance, judgment, and especially resurrection.
  - Not the Greek arrangement of *insinuatio* – not upfront, but delayed.
- *Rhetorica* (Aristotle)
  - Paul clears himself from disagreeable suspicion that he is preaching foreign gods – Jesus and Anastasia.
  - Paul is not proclaiming foreign deities (prejudiced accusation), but one of their unknown gods.

# *Insinuatio* in Acts 17:22-31

- *De Inventione* (Cicero)
  - Paul has a difficult case with an audience opposed to repentance, judgment, and resurrection.
  - As such, Paul uses *insinuatio*, not *principium*.
  - Paul is not dealing with a persuaded audience or tired audience, but a scandalous case.
  - Paul imperceptibly wins their goodwill by shifting their focus to the unknown God and commonalities.
  - Paul waits until the end in 17:30-31 to bring up the most scandalous parts about resurrection.

# *Insinuatio* in Acts 17:22-31

- *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (Cornificus)
  - Paul's case is not doubtful, petty, or honorable, but discreditable.
  - Paul thus uses *insinuatio*, namely, for a discreditable case.
  - Paul does not use the *insinuatio* for a persuaded or wearied audience.
  - Paul's discreditable subject is repentance, judgment, and resurrection.
  - Paul doesn't follow Cornificus' particular instructions though, just the arrangement.

# *Insinuatio* in Acts 17:22-31

- *Institutio Oratoria* (Quintilian)
  - Paul has a discreditable subject matter (resurrection), not discreditable features or outward circumstances.
  - Paul insinuates little by little.
  - Resurrection is disgraceful by popular disapproval.
  - Paul thus delays in bringing up the topics until the end of the speech in 17:30-31.

# Conclusion

- Paul uses the Roman *insinuatio* for a scandalous case.
- He builds rapport throughout the speech, and waits until the end to bring up the most difficult topic.
- Paul does not use the Greek *insinuatio*.
- Paul does not use the Roman *insinuatio* for a persuaded audience.
- Paul does not use the Roman *insinuatio* for a wearied audience.
- Paul does use the Roman *insinuatio* for a scandalous case.