The Rhetoric of *Insinuatio*: Theory and Practice

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Definitions

- NT/Classical Rhetorical Scholars
  - Stanley E. Porter
  - David E. Aune
  - George A. Kennedy
  - Ben Witherington III
  - Karl Olav Sandnes
  - E. W. Bower
- Problem with these definitions
  - They treat *insinuatio* as monolithic, when it is actually multifarious.
  - They don't cite many primary sources, and if they do, it's only from one or two places. The problem is that all 5 extant handbooks on rhetoric talk at length about *insinuatio* (theory) and we also have many extant speeches that employ *insinuatio* (practice).

Rhetorical Theory

- *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 29
  - Author: Anaximenes of Lampsacus.
  - Date: Ca. 340 B.C.
  - Within his discussion of the προοίμιον (*exordium*).
  - 3 audiences: "kindly disposed, or hostile, or neither good nor bad."
    - 1 and 3 don't require much of the orator; but 2 requires the orator to address the prejudice.
  - 3 sources of prejudice: "with regard to themselves, with regard to the matters about which they are speaking, or with regard to their speech."
    - Against the speaker.
    - Against the subject.
    - Against the speech.

Rhetorical Theory

- *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum 29*
  - Against the speaker (29.11-23a)
    - If from the past (11-17a)
      - Use anticipation (11)
      - Make a summary defense (12)
      - Criticize the judgments (12)
      - Unjust judgment (13)
      - Suffered misfortune (13)
      - If trial (14)
      - If not prosecuted (15)
      - Condemn prejudice (16)
      - Just, advantageous, honorable (16)
        - Transition formula (17a)
    - If from the present (17b-23a)
      - Age: old/young (17b)
      - Speaking too much/too little (18)
      - For young men (19-21a)
      - For old men (21b)
      - For experienced speakers (22)
      - For inexperienced speakers (22)
        - Transition formula (23a)

Rhetorical Theory

- *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 29
  - Against the subject (29.23b-25a)
    - Sources of the prejudice (23b)
      - Disrupting peace
      - Recommending small contributions for sacrifice
      - Similar things
    - Instruction to overcome the prejudice (24)
      - Use anticipation
      - Make excuses
      - Transition formula (25a)
  - Against the speech (29.25b-27a)
    - Sources of prejudice (25b)
      - Too long (26a)
      - Old-fashioned (26b)
      - Not credible (26c)
      - Transition formula (27a)

Rhetorical Theory

- *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 29
  - Arrangement of the προοίμιον / *exordium* (29.27b-28)
    - If no prejudice – direct approach (29.27b)
      - Proposal
      - Call for attention
      - Call for a favorable hearing
    - If prejudice – indirect approach (29.28)
      - Anticipate the prejudice
      - Give concise defenses and excuses against the prejudice
      - Proposal
      - Call for attention

Rhetorical Theory

- *Rhetorica* 3.14-15
  - Author: Aristotle.
  - Date: Ca. 330 B.C.
  - Within his discussion of the προοίμιον (*exordium*).
  - The προοίμιον (*exordium*) for the three species of rhetoric (3.14.1-12)
    - Definition (3.14.1)
    - In epideictic (3.14.2-4)
    - In forensic (3.14.5-11)
    - In deliberative (3.14.12)

Rhetorical Theory

- *Rhetorica* 3.14-15
  - Removing Prejudice [for a defender] (3.15.1-9)
    - Clear oneself from disagreeable suspicion (3.15.1)
    - Contest the disputed points (3.15.2)
      - Deny the fact or its harmfulness
      - Assert that its importance is exaggerated
      - Say it is not unjust at all, or only slightly so
      - Say it is neither disgraceful nor important
      - Example – Iphicrates
    - Say that it was a case of error, misfortune, or necessity (3.15.3)
      - Example – Sophocles
      - Substitute one motive for another
      - Accidental
    - 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)
      - Example – Euripides
    - Attack slander: it is evil (3.15.9)
      - Reason: it alters judgments and does not rely on real facts.
      - Example – Teucer

Rhetorical Theory

- *Rhetorica* 3.14-15
  - Creating Prejudice [for an accuser] (3.15.10a)
    - Praise unimportant at length and condemn important concisely
      - Most artful and unfair
  - Removing and/or Creating Prejudice [for accuser or defender] (3.15.10b)
    - Exploit the multiple motives
      - Accuser: the worse sense
      - Defender: the better sense
    - Example – Diomedes and Odysseus

Rhetorical Theory

- *De Inventione* 1.15-18
  - Author: Cicero (young)
  - Date: ca. 91-85 B.C.
  - Incomplete handbooks (only discusses 1 of the 5 components of rhetoric, namely, invention).
  - Within his discussion of *exordium*.

Rhetorical Theory

- *De Inventione* 1.15-18
  - The *exordium* (1.15.20-1.18.26)
    - Definition (1.15.20)
      - Five kinds of cases
        - Honorable [*honestum*]
        - Difficult [*admirabile*]
        - Mean [*humile*]
        - Ambiguous [*anceps*]
        - Obscure [*obscurum*]
      - Two kinds of *exordia*
        - Introduction [*principium*]
        - Insinuation [*insinuatio*]

Rhetorical Theory

- *De Inventione* 1.15-18
- Insinuation [*insinuatio*] (1.17.23-1.17.25)
  - Overview (1.17.23)
  - Three causes of hostility (1.17.24-1.17.25)
    - Scandalous case (1.17.24)
      - Shift the audience's attention from what it hates to what it favors
      - Conceal intentions to defend the scandalous point
      - After that, approach the scandalous point little by little
      - Say that what displeases them, displeases us
      - Demonstrate your innocence from these scandalous charges
      - Assure the audience you will not mention the opponent
      - Do not openly attack the opponent
      - Imperceptibly win the goodwill away from the opponent
      - Share an analogous case worthy of imitation
    - Audience persuaded by previous orator (1.17.25)
      - Promise to discuss first the opponent's strongest argument
      - Begin referencing a recent quote of the opponent
      - Show perplexity and astonishment of where to begin
    - Audience wearied by previous orator (1.17.25)
      - Promise to speak more briefly than prepared
      - Promise to not speak as long as the opponent

Rhetorical Theory

- *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.4-7
  - Author: Cornificus? Not Cicero.
  - Date: ca. 86-82 B.C.
  - The author claims to be the first composer of a handbook (art) to contribute a section on *insinuatio* and thus provides the first full section on *exordium*.

Rhetorical Theory

- *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.4-7
  - Subtle approach [*insinuatio*] (1.6)
    - Three occasions for the Subtle approach (1.6.9-1.6.10)
      - Discreditable case [*turpe*] (1.6.9)
        - Consider the agent, not the action
        - Express displeasure for the action; unworthy and heinous
        - Later on, prove our innocence concerning this action
        - State the judgment of an analogous case
        - Then gradually connect it to our case
        - Deny responding to opponents, but then subtly do so
      - Hearers won over by previous speaker (1.6.10)
        - Promise to discuss opponent's strongest evidence first
        - Begin with a statement of the opponent
        - Use Indecision with astonishment
      - Hearers wearied by previous speaker (1.6.10)
        - Provoke laughter
        - Promise not to speak what we prepared
        - Briefly recap previous speaker and set forth our intentions

Rhetorical Theory

- *Institutio Oratoria* 4.1.42-50
  - Author: Quintilian.
  - Date: ca. A.D. 91-100.
  - Longest discussion of *insinuatio* (and everything).

Rhetorical Theory

- *Institutio Oratoria* 4.1.42-50
  - Insinuation [*insinuatio*] (4.1.42-50)
    - Nature of *insinuatio* (4.1.42)
      - Definition
      - Three Situations
        - Discreditable features
        - Discreditable subject
        - Discreditable outward circumstances

Rhetorical Theory

- *Institutio Oratoria* 4.1.42-50
  - How to save the situation through *insinuatio* (4.1.43-47)
    - Invent fictitious cases (4.1.43)
      - Impossible to classify
    - General principles (4.1.44-45a)
      - If weak, character of client (4.1.44)
      - If doubtful character, nature of case (4.1.44)
      - If neither, damage opponent (4.1.44)
      - If unable to deny facts (4.1.45a)
        - Significance exaggerated
        - Purpose not as alleged
        - Facts are irrelevant
        - Act may be atoned by repentance
        - Already punished enough
    - Advocates (4.1.45b-47)
      - Easier with an advocate (4.1.45b)
      - Example – Cicero (4.1.46)
      - Appealing to emotions (4.1.47)

Rhetorical Theory

- *Institutio Oratoria* 4.1.42-50
  - Occasions for *insinuatio* (4.1.48-50)
    - Opponent has won over the judges (4.1.48a)
      - Promise to produce own proofs
      - Elude the arguments of opponents
    - The audience is tired (4.1.48b-50)
      - Give audience hope of a brief response (4.1.48b)
      - Capture their attention (4.1.48b)
      - Use wit and entertaining matters (4.1.49a)
      - Anticipate the objections (4.1.49b-50)
      - Example – Cicero in Verrine orations

Summary of Rhetorical Theory

- The Greeks and Romans both addressed prejudice; though in different ways. The Greeks approached it head on, whereas the Romans delayed bringing it up.
- *Insinuatio* was not monolithic; it could be used for several occasions and several reasons.
- *Inv.* and *Rhet. Her.* are virtually identical.

Rhetorical Practice

- Greek Speeches
  - Thucydides
    - 1.37-34
    - 3.53-59, 61-67
    - 6.16-18, 33-34, 89-92
    - 8.53
  - Lysias
    - Speech 21
    - Speech 25
  - Isocrates
    - Antidosis
  - Demosthenes
    - First Philippic
    - Second Philippic
    - On the Crown

Rhetorical Practice

- Roman Speeches
  - Cicero
    - *Pro Publio Quinctio*
    - *Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino*
    - Verrine Orations
      - Against Verres at the First Hearing
        - Cicero built so much prejudice against Verres that Hortensius would have had to use *insinuatio*.
      - The Second Speech against Gaius Verres: Book II-III
        - Attention *insinuatio*.
    - *Pro L. Murena Oratio*
      - Prejudice against Cicero, then prejudice against Murena.
    - *Pro P. Sulla Oratio*
      - Both direct and indirect approach.
      - Attention.

Summary of Rhetorical Practice

- The Greeks were much more upfront and approached prejudice head on. This might be considered the direct approach instead of an indirect (*insinuatio*). Nevertheless, it is still within the *insinuatio* category because they were indeed still dealing with prejudice. In sum, they refuted prejudice at the beginning.

- The Romans developed the full doctrine of *insinuatio* and preferred to defer the prejudice until the end. In sum, they refuted prejudice at the end.

- One can use a direct and indirect approach in the same speech, contra the handbooks.

- *Insinuatio* was used for many different situations and scenarios, and in all types of rhetoric (deliberative, forensic, and epideictic; but not much in epideictic).

- *Insinuatio* in practice used quite a bit of refutation (*refutatio*).

- *Insinuatio* in practice was most appropriate for forensic defense speeches, that is, refuting accusations. However, it was also appropriate for deliberative speeches if prejudice was against the speaker or their subject matter.

- The Roman approach (*insinuatio*) is much more pertinent for NT studies since Paul was a Roman and would've been more versed in that approach. Moreover, the other NT writers were writing for the Roman world, not the golden Greek era of classical Athens.

Insinuatio in the NT

- Rom 9-11
- 2 Cor 10-13
- Acts 17
- Acts 24
- Philemon
- 1 Cor 15?