

MARIA ELICE, *Romani Aquilae De figuris. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e commento a cura di M. E.*, Bibliotheca Weidmanniana, 12. Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 2007, pp. CCX + 241, ISBN 978-3487134734.¹

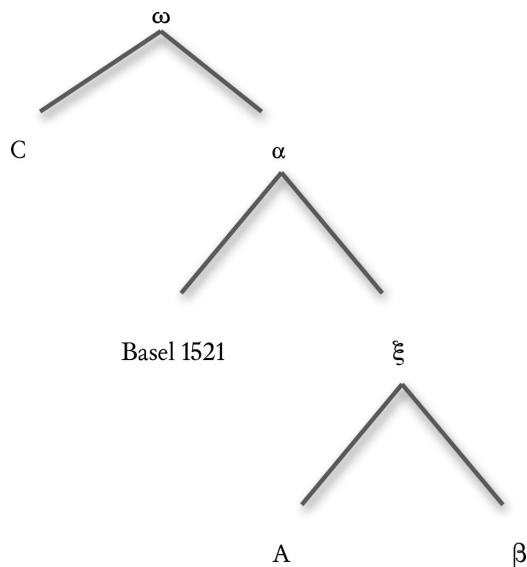
Written perhaps in the third century CE, the *libellus* of Aquila Romanus on figures of thought and figures of speech stands second in Halm's collection of *Rhetores Latini Minores* (*RLM*: 1863), between the pamphlets, also on figures, by Rutilius Lupus and Iulius Rufinianus. All three are alike in scale and format: the body of each consists of a series of brief paragraphs, one paragraph to a figure, in which the name of the figure (in Greek) stands as the lemma, followed by a brief discursive definition and one or more examples drawn, typically, from the great school authors. In the case of A(quila) R(omanus), who based himself on the earlier Greek rhetorical writer Alexander Numenius, examples from Demosthenes are found among the predominantly Latin selections—here and there an isolated quotation from Vergil or Terence, and above all Cicero, including many quotations from speeches now lost. Sixteen pages in Halm are enough to do the job: sixteen figures of thought, from prodiorthosis to metastasis, then another twenty-odd figures of speech, from antithesis to ellipsis, and we are done.

But now Maria E(lice) has set AR apart from his companions in *RLM*, replacing Halm's sixteen pages with 450 of her own. To anticipate and answer the obvious question: yes, the added pages actually are worth it. For starters, between the introduction and the commentary E. has provided a grounding in the tradition of writing *de figuris* as thorough as any student of rhetoric could desire. The heart of the introduction (pp. LXIII-CL) is a wonderfully learned tour of that tradition, from AR's source, Alexander (of whom only excerpts survive) through Martianus Capella (who used AR) and beyond. Then the commentary (pp. 91-206) adds more depth and texture with notes that provide clear explications and countless additional parallels and examples.

It is the constitution of the text, however, that is the edition's true *raison d'être*, for that is where E. made a striking discovery. Halm based his text for *RLM* on one mid-fifteenth century manuscript from Vienna and five previous editions, including those of Robert Estienne (1530) and David Ruhnken (1768). E. dutifully surveyed all the other fifteenth-century manuscripts—there are fifteen of these in all—and was able to establish the probable relations among them; she was also able to establish that the edition published in Basel in 1521 very likely descends independently from the common ancestor of those fifteen manuscript books. But the striking discovery was lurking in the Biblioteca Casanatense, a

¹ My apologies to both the author of this book and the editors of *Exemplaria Classica* for the tardiness of this review.

Dominican foundation in Rome dating to the start of the eighteenth century: there E. found a ninth-century manuscript, Casanatensis 1086 (C), that on three *folia* (55-57) preserves all of AR on the figures of speech, about seventy percent of the text (the introduction is reduced to a single sentence and all the figures of thought are omitted). In simplified form, the plausible *stemma* that E. has been able to produce looks like this (cf. p. CCIX):



where A is a book, now in the Laurentiana, written ca. 1425 in a hand identified by A. C. De la Mare as Poggio Bracciolini's (Florence, BML XXXVII.25) and β is the common ancestor of the fourteen other humanist books. (On E.'s reconstruction, eight different manuscripts were derived from β, seven of which are still extant; the missing eighth was in turn the common ancestor of the other seven known manuscripts.) E. is able to show that in the portion of the work preserved by C there are dozens upon dozens of places where the text of C is clearly superior to that of α, including many places where α's text is marred by omissions: examples of the latter include 25.21 E. = 27.13 *RLM conexa*, 29.3 = 27.30 *vi*, 29.16 = 28.10 *virorum*, p. 31.3-3 = 28.11-2 *accensi . . . tuae* (a whole line lost through *saut du même au même*), 35.1 = 29.12-3 *facit*, 35.14 = 29.24 *fere*, 37.5 = 30.2 *ut si dicas*, and so on. (Some of the omissions could be made good, e.g. from the independently preserved text of an author AR is quoting, but by no means all of them could, and that is true *mutatis mutandis* of the other errors, some of them gross, that distinguish α's text from C's.) The improved text that E. now provides is supported at the bottom of the page by a critical apparatus and an *apparatus fontium* that are both exemplary in their construction, and it is followed by an appendix (71-90) that gives a thorough accounting of all conjectures and other text-critical interventions that have been attempted.

In short, then, E.'s edition is an example of philological scholarship carried out at a very high level: Aquila Romanus—*si quicquam mutis gratum acceptumve sepulcris*—should be deeply pleased that he has been so well served, and students of ancient rhetoric should be grateful for the new tool that has been put at their disposal.

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