

# The Scholastic Teaching of Rhetoric in the Middle Ages\*

Karin Margareta Fredborg

Medieval rhetorical instruction was cast in many forms, corresponding to the different needs of the preacher, the politician, the official entrusted with drawing up documents for the ecclesiastical and lay authorities and the teacher or student of the Liberal Arts. Highly formalized and developed treatises were written for all these branches of rhetoric. Their proliferation in manuscripts still extant will ensure for the Middle Ages a distinct and important place in the history of rhetoric. That this instruction provided a powerful tool for literary composition has been evidenced by literary studies both of Latin and of vernacular authors, where particularly Chaucer's rhetoric has been the subject of frequent discussion.<sup>1</sup> Nor was rhetoric restricted to prose composition; rhetorical intrusions can be found in the medieval theories of poetry, notably on the subjects of style and on the microstructures of plot and character delineation, the rhetorical topics.<sup>2</sup>

From a historical point of view, it may evoke criticism to classify as "scholastic" the branch of medieval rhetoric to be discussed here, namely the eleventh- to fourteenth-century Latin commentaries on Cicero's, Boethius' and Aristotle's rhetorical works. If 'scholastic' is taken to mean something characteristically medieval, these rhetorical commentaries are not scholastic in the sense of being a particularly medieval contribution as were the Arts of Letterwriting (*Artes Dictaminis*) or to some extent the Arts of Preaching (*Artes Praedican-*

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1. For the full form of bibliographical references see bibliography. Cf. Auerbach, Kelly, Payne and Faulhaber, who give further bibliographical references.

di). They are rather a revival of the late classical commentary tradition as extant in the *De Inventione* commentaries by Victorinus (4th c.A.D.) and Grillius (6th c.A.D.). Secondly, if 'scholastic' is more narrowly understood as referring to a methodology characteristic of the Middle Ages, other medieval branches of rhetoric have an equal claim to being called scholastic in the sense that they too were offered to the students in the medieval universities or the studia of the mendicant orders.<sup>3</sup> There all branches were studied with due scholastic interest in definition, systematization, classification, subdivisions and so forth.

However, I have here reserved the term 'scholastic' teaching of rhetoric as a name more particularly for the medieval Latin commentaries on the classical handbooks, since precisely their authors, when writing on the Liberal Arts, on philosophy or theology, are deservedly considered scholastic authors, e.g. Abelard, Thierry of Chartres, Petrus Helias, John Buridan (to mention only a few of the better known authors). Furthermore, these commentaries themselves partake wholeheartedly in the particularly scholastic effort of interrelating and integrating all branches of learning into one body of knowledge well accounted for, a feature which distinguishes this kind of rhetoric from the more specialized treatises on letterwriting and preaching. On the other hand, scholastic authors in other fields discussing the exact relation between the different branches of knowledge drew their arguments concerning rhetoric from the Ciceronian and Aristotelian commentaries, rather than from elsewhere. This dependence on the commentaries, which can be found in many places, is perhaps particularly clear in the rhetoric section of Robert Kilwardby's *De ortu scientiarum* (c. 1250). In *De ortu*, especially ch. 59, Kilwardby bases his treatment of rhetoric on the Pseudo-Ciceronian treatise *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and on Gundissalinus' *De divisione philosophiae*, which in turn consists mainly of extracts from Thierry

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2. Cf. Faral p. 48-54; 99-101; 135-51. See also Murphy 1978.

3. Cf. Maieru p. 323, Siraisi ch.2, Weisheipl p. 169, Glorieux p. 148-61.

of Chartres' introduction to his commentary on the *De inventi-*  
*one*.<sup>4</sup>

Finally the very commentary form of these medieval rhetorical treatises has some important implications for their scholastic character, as opposed to the later rhetorical writings by the Renaissance humanists. If we here follow the criteria of distinguishing between the medieval scholastic and the later humanist rhetoric as established in an excellent study by Samuel P. Jaffe,<sup>5</sup> we may pay special attention to the following characteristics: the scholastic commentary, though basing itself on one primary authority, takes several other authorities into account, on the basis of which the commentator interprets the rhetorical system in question from a systematical, unhistorical viewpoint. The humanist, on the other hand, proceeds by historical-philological criticism and interpretation. Accordingly, the aim of the scholastic writer is to establish a set of precepts - supported by examples from authorities - to be applied in individual compositions. The humanist, on his side, aims at purifying, historically-philologically, a unique and venerable source from Antiquity which is to be the object of true imitation.

While this distinction holds good in general for medieval vs. Renaissance rhetoric, it may be said to apply particularly well to the medieval scholastic commentaries as opposed to the independent rhetorical treatises composed by the great Renaissance scholars. Thus the Ciceronian rhetorical commentaries composed in the Renaissance continued for a long time to keep their essentially scholastic flavour and background, while the onset of the new era was due to the independent Renaissance treatises - which were, generally speaking, written by and for a quite different set of people than those connected with the contemporary commentary tradition.<sup>6</sup> Hence it is not surprising

4. Cf. McKeon p. 17, Hunt p. 91, Fredborg 1971 p. 6-11, Ward 1972b p. 251-61. The contrary view, that Thierry borrowed from Gundissalinus is expressed by Haring.

5. Jaffe, particularly p. 64-5.

6. Cf. John O. Ward, "Renaissance commentators on Ciceronian rhetoric," *Renaissance eloquence. Studies in the theory and practice of Renaissance rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1983) pp. 126-173.

that even early twelfth-century Ciceronian commentaries by William of Champeaux (c. 1095), Thierry of Chartres (1130s) and his student Petrus Helias (c.1140) were still copied frequently and used in schools as late as the fifteenth century,<sup>7</sup> along with Renaissance commentaries, which they influenced by their choice of illustrative examples and manners of commenting.<sup>8</sup>

Generally speaking, the rhetorical commentaries written for students, first of the medieval cathedral schools and later of the universities, fall into three distinct periods: a Ciceronian, a Boethian, and an Aristotelian period - partly according to the choice of authority to be commented upon or to function as the main source of arguments for the development of doctrine, and partly according to the shift of emphasis on the different functions of rhetoric. Evidently, this kind of division is somewhat crude, but it is clear that the twelfth-century commentators were keen to follow Cicero's view that rhetoric was a part of civil science (*De inv.* I.5.6) and fastened with enthusiasm on the characteristic image for this, the union of Wisdom and Eloquence, which raised man from the level of wild beasts to humanity, from primitive chaos to social order (*De inv.* I.1.1-4.5). The thirteenth century, on the other hand, paid greater attention to disentangling the relation between rhetoric and dialectic, according to the differences in aim, method, subject matter and social setting, as

7. William of Champeaux: Ms. Wien, Öster. Nationalbibl. BPL 3147; Ms Alba Julia (Roumania) II.77, s.XV (2 of 6 Mss). Thierry: Ms Munchen, Staatsbibl. clm 3565; Ms London, B.L., Harl. 5080; Praha, U.B. VII. h.33 s.XV (3 of 8 Mss). P. Helias: Ms Brescia, Bibl. Civ. Quirin. A.V.4 no. 4 s.XV; Ms Erfurt Amplon. 4<sup>o</sup> 71 fols 42-115, s.XIV; Ms Erfurt Amplon. 4<sup>o</sup> 75; Ms Vat. Ottob.lat.2993 anno 1357 (4 of 6). For the chronological distribution of all the Ciceronian commentaries see Ward 1978, p. 38.

8. Thus a Paduan 15th c. commentary on *Rhet. ad Her.* (Ms Milano, Bibl. Ambros. 142 inf. f. 100sq.) used Thierry's form of introduction: definition, higher order, subjectmatter, duty, aims, parts, kinds, instrument, 'artifex' and name (cf. Hunt), which in general went out of fashion by the 13th century. Since the author freely quotes from Walter Burleigh, Giles of Rome, Quintilian and even *De oratore* this anonymous commentary must have been composed (not only copied) in the Renaissance.

set forth by Boethius in his fourth book of *De differentiis topicis*. Finally, from the end of the thirteenth century and with the emergence of the Latin translations of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (from Arabic by Hermannus Alemannus, 1250,<sup>9</sup> and from Greek by William of Moerbeke, c. 1270,<sup>10</sup> a strong Aristotelian influence sets in. Then we find, both in the few extant commentaries on the *Rhetoric* and also in the more numerous commentaries on the Pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* a widened and more precise range of arguments for the exact nature, function and means of rhetoric among the other arts and sciences, drawn not only from the classical rhetorical authorities, but also from the full range of the Aristotelian corpus now available to the West.

The sheer bulk of these many, long, unedited and little known commentaries makes it impossible to trace their doctrinal development in great detail here.<sup>11</sup> Instead, I propose to illustrate the three periods with examples, the first of which is, perhaps surprisingly, not a scholastic commentary at all. It is a section of a much longer letter from the abbot Wibald of Corvai, writing in 1149 somewhat discursively on the Liberal Arts and philosophy to an otherwise unknown Manegold, canon and schoolmaster of Paderborn:<sup>12</sup>

"You even flatter me and say that I possess some eloquence. But eloquence is something requiring more than a brief and perfunctory period of study, and more than little practice, in order that we may master psychology and spur on the lazy or keep back the too eager by use of powerful reins. For, even if the student's nature is subtle and tractable, and even if the teacher spends much diligent effort on this kind of education, if still practice is infrequent - and

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9. Unedited, cf. Boggess.

10. Moerbeke's and an anonymous translation are now available in a fully critical edition by B. Schneider, *Aristoteles Latinus XXXI*, 1-2 (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

11. For details of development see the pioneering studies by McKeon, Caplan, Dickey, O'Donnell, Ward.

12. *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Migne, 189, 1254B-55C (1249C-1257 B). The letter is also translated, without any indication of rhetorical, Ciceronian sources, in *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric*, cf. bibliography.

such practice is very remote pursuit in monastery life - then it is all to no avail (cf. *De inv.* I.1.2). The fire will be quenched by darkness and no ember will keep it alive. For a real orator must be in action in order that he, for himself and those entrusted to his care, may forcefully by shield defend and by sword attack (cf. *De inv.* I.1.1). Go and read Quintilian who teaches how to educate the orator from the mother's womb to perfection!

In our time, however, the real opportunities for this pursuit have disappeared. For all jurisdiction is now in the hands of either secular or ecclesiastical authority. The secular jurisdiction is carried out by uneducated people (though sometimes very able speakers by nature), but among the Germans the habit of declamation is rare. Instead they have the habit of speaking briefly, indicating only the main topics of a case instead of fully explaining their theme.

On the other hand, the canonical jurisdiction is in the hands of very well educated people. But they hear constantly the Law of God: "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (*Matth.* 7.1). Hence to them true Christian unhappiness is to commit injustice, not to suffer injustice. Furthermore, they read the law of that most sovereign legislator: "let your communication be 'Yea, yea', 'nay, nay'. For whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil" (*Matth.* 5.37). And one speaker of this lofty court says: "turn away the reproach which I fear" (*Psalms.* 119.39).

Consequently, no hidden suspicion, no conjecture, no occasion for proof or disproof is adopted - in fact, nothing but the bare 'issue' of the case is left: "Did you commit this? Yes, I did! No, I did not!" (*De inv.* I.8.10). Yet, the learned pagan authors of rhetorical textbooks gave the rule that the orator should not speak as a moral censor (*Rhet. ad Her.* II.3.5). The rhetorician may use false, daring, sly and wicked means of persuasion, if only they have the appearance of truth and can, by any elegant turn of phrase, imperceptibly drug or ease the mind of the audience. Indeed, it is even considered disgraceful, if the

rhetorician - even in a bad case - does not explore every possible means of defence. But a good, trustworthy and honourable man should not in front of a Christian audience utter such words that are not true to himself and to all. Hence, in canonical law such a master of speech is deemed to further only his own ambition, not his case. The judges of Areopagus, those most stern judges of Athens and all of Greece, did not allow even the use of prologues and fiery conclusions, but only simple and uncoloured narration (Grillius, ed. Martin p.2, from Arist. Rhet. 1354a23). There, you see, nearly all the foundations of the art of rhetoric are now being demolished.

However, within the Church, there do exist some opportunities for rhetoric which incur nobody's reproach, namely within the office of preaching - the acknowledged king of which (in my judgement) is Bernard, the abbot of Clairvaux, a most famous man of our time. For him I justly call a true orator according to the definition of the rhetorician: 'a good man, skilled in speech'... Him you would call truly eloquent who does not destroy by hand what he preaches by lips... So, if you too want to have renown for eloquence, choose someone to imitate, whose sweetness of tongue does charm your heart. For the greatest rhetoricians unanimously agree that highly polished and copious eloquence is better achieved by imitation of good speakers than by slavishly following the textbook's precepts (Aug. De doctr. Christ. IV.3.4)".

The modern reader of this eloquent showpiece against the pagan Arts and in defense of a christianization of these Arts - including rhetoric - must beware of ignoring Wibald's allusions to authorities, which the addressee, Manegold, undoubtedly would have recognised. Upon a superficial reading Wibald is here merely pleading that the classical (particularly the forensic) rhetoric had lost its social context, that for the educated Christian the moral taint implied in rhetorical effects combined with want of truth was utterly reprehensible, and that true Christian eloquence must be confined to preaching. Even here, he says, the textbooks should be abandoned. We may

smile at Wibald's reference to the wanting habit of declamation in Germany, or the monasteries providing little scope for rhetorical practice and showpieces. We may even be slightly surprised to find St. Bernard cast in the role of the humanist ideal of the perfect orator, "a good man skilled in speech" (*Vir bonus, dicendi peritus*), though at least one modern literary critic has, on independent grounds, made the same plea.<sup>13</sup>

In fact, there is little reason to trust Wibald's overtly pre-Renaissance humanism here, since he is only alluding to the standard authority on preaching, St. Augustine; and the storehouse of Wibald's arguments is not to be found on a seemingly humanist and devotional side, but precisely in those textbooks whose utility he sets out to deny. As indicated in the bracketed references, his arguments are drawn exactly from the *De inventione* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* or from subsidiary authorities mentioned by his contemporary commentators on these. The mention of the stern Ariopagites comes from Grillius and simply cannot be found divorced from this very commentary tradition.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, the mention of a bare 'issue' bereft of suspicion, conjecture and proof makes little sense, unless the reader keeps in mind that the very framework of the Ciceronian rhetorical tradition is built upon the divisions and subdivisions of 'issues', according to which the arguments and topics of argument for the individual cases were selected. Wibald is clearly trained to define the 'issue' of a conjectural case (*an sit*) and proving by definition what a case is (*quid sit*).

Nor may we take Wibald's reference to Quintilian at face value, as a substantial argument in favour of humanism rather than scholasticism. Very few people in the twelfth century read through Quintilian, though sections of his *Institutiones Oratoriae* were available in florilegia, e.g. the *Florilegium*

13. Auerbach p. 207: "Es ist mindestens stilistisch ein Missverhältnis wenn man Bernhard von Clairvaux einen Antihumanisten nennt. Er ist ein Antischolastiker, aber einer der grössten Meister der christliche Rhetorik".

14. Cf. Dickey p. 30-32. P. Helias (Ms Cambridge, Pembroke Coll. 85, iii, f. 84vb) implicitly quotes Grillius' reference to the Ariopagites.



Gallicum.<sup>15</sup> Only John of Salisbury, rhetoric student of Thierry of Chartres and Petrus Helias, quoted freely from Quintilian and even took care to procure a carefully executed copy (*Quintilianum scriptum et emendatum*).<sup>16</sup> But John was an exception and his teachers and contemporaries had only a very limited knowledge of Quintilian and Cicero's *De oratore*.<sup>17</sup> However, the commentators Thierry, Petrus Helias and Alanus all give brief, explicit references to Quintilian on the definition of rhetoric<sup>18</sup> and phrase these references in the hortative manner of Wibald's. This then is the most probable source of Wibald's : "go and read Quintilian".

Consequently, the hidden allusions in Wibald's letter firmly confirm his acquaintance with Cicero and his scholastic commentators, and the 'humanist' and devotional overtones should not obscure this acquaintance - of which he is evidently rather proud. We may safely assume from these Ciceronian allusions that he had been taught very much like the students of Thierry and Petrus Helias. His teachers would have given special interest to forensic oratory, which was considered the most difficult, and have trained him thoroughly in defining the 'issue' of a case - whether the case was so (*an sit*), what exactly was the case (*quid sit*) and how justifiable it was

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15. *Florilegium Gallicum*, Ms Paris, Arsenal 711 (formerly St. Victor), s. XII, f. 182sq. Cf. R.H. & M.A. Rouse, "The 'Florilegium Angelicum': its origin, content and influences", *Medieval Learning and literature: Essays presented to R.W. Hunt*, ed. J.J.G. Alexander & M.T. Gibson (Oxford, 1976) p. 84 (66-114).

16. John, letter 274, *Patrologia Latina* 199, 313D. John also possessed and donated to the cathedral of Chartres a copy of *De oratore*, cf. *Cartulaire de Notre Dame de Chartres*, e.E. de Lépinois & L. Merlet (Chartres, 1864), III p. 202.

17. Thierry quotes (ad *De inv.* I.5.7) *De oratore* I.15.64; he further quotes *Quint.* III.5.7 (ad *De inv.* I.6.8), *Quint.* III.6.4-11 (ad *De inv.* I.8.10), *Quint.* V.10.21sq. (ad *De inv.* I.24.34, cf. Fredborg 1971 p. 19) and *Quint.* VIII.6.4 (ad *Rhet. ad Her.* IV.31.42); P. Helias had little independent knowledge of Quintilian, cf. Fredborg 1974 p. 34 n.19 & p. 40 n.43. Alanus occasionally quotes Quintilian, but had no access to *De oratore*: "*De oratore, quo nos caremus*" Ms London, B.L. Harl. 6324 f. 2vb.

18. Thierry, ed. Suringar p. 219; P. Helias Ms Cambridge, Pembroke Col. 85, iii, f. 84ra; Alanus, Ms London, B.L. Harl. 6324 f. 1rb.

(iurene sit). The theory of the 'issues' was of deep theoretical concern, though the masters occasionally complained of the difficulty of applying this theory to eleventh or twelfth century legal practice.<sup>19</sup> Wibald would further have been drilled in assigning arguments and topics for argument along with a similar drill in dialectics, a training which, he says, also served him simply as a system of mnemonics when he tried to memorize "the volume of any kind of difficult argument".<sup>20</sup>

His rhetorical training would have consisted in his teachers first commenting upon the *De inventione*, called the *Rhetorica Prima*, then on the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, called the *Rhetorica Secunda*, since this work too was commonly, though not unanimously, accepted as part of one Ciceronian corpus of rhetoric. For William of Champeaux, and particularly a student of his, fastened upon the needless repetitions and lack of exact cross-references between the two and the curious fact that the standard commentator, Victorinus, had only commented upon the first - all of which was unexplainable to them, on the assumption that the two manuals constituted a continuum opus<sup>21</sup>. Later on in the twelfth century these existent incon-

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19. P. Helias, cf. Fredborg 1974 p. 35, cf. the anon. 11th c. gloss on *De Inv.*, Ms. Oxford, Bodl. Lib., Laud. lat 49 f. 131vb: "Formerly, the rule was that he should lose his case who did not plead according to the rules. Nowadays this is hardly ever the case, since anybody rushes to court in whatever manner he wants to, and does not care about what he says and accordingly defines or transfers his case in wrong manner" (erat praeterea institutum, ut <e> causa caderet is qui non quemadmodum <oportebat> egisset. Quod tamen nostro tempore minime fit, cum utique ad causam agenda quivis accurrat et quod dicat non respiciat, et sic causam male definiat vel male transferat).

20. Wibald, same letter, *Patrologia Latina* 189, 1251D.

21. William, Ms York, Minster XVI. M. 7, f. 51rb; William's student, Ms. Durham, Cath. lib. C.IV.29, f. 201vb-202ra: "In alio autem quem facit ad Here<nnium> de ceteris agit, sed non videtur esse continuum opus his duobus libris (viz. *De inventione*); immo videntur deesse libri illi, de (de: in ms) quibus in fine secundi libri horum dicit (*De inv.* II. 59. 178) ... quibus libris nos carere aut ipsum non fecisse indicio potest esse (1) vel quod expositionem Victorini non habemus ... (2) vel quod *Libri ad Herennium* adeo seiuncti sunt ab istis quod neque illa in eis mentio de istis fit ... Itaque, ut Ovidiano utamur versiculo: non possunt ullis ista coire modis etc." (*Ov. Amores.* 3.4.42). Cf. Fredborg 1976b.

gruities were simply harmonised in scholastic style: Thierry and his followers subsumed the 'issue'-system of the *De inventione* under the less complicated one of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and insisted on applying the list of topics from the former to all arguments found in the latter, with occasional complaints that the latter had failed to be sufficiently specific concerning topics.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the divisions of counter-argument of the *De inventione* were made to cover the different system of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, although the two systems are basically incongruous, the former being subdivided mainly according to the kinds of necessary and probable arguments, the latter according to the five parts of the rhetorical argument, the 'epicheirema'. Philological inquiries and piecemeal interpretation thus became converted into a closely knit and highly systematised rhetorical theory.

The next century was much less interested in scholastic rhetoric. Very few Ciceronian commentaries were written<sup>23</sup>. The university of Paris provided, according to the statutes from 1215, only teaching of the two 'Rhetorics' outside the ordinary teaching days.<sup>24</sup> At Bologna, too, Ciceronian rhetoric was to be found outside the curriculum of the Faculty of Arts. There the "dictator" Boncompagno in 1235 composed his dictamen *Rhetorica novissima* allegedly because Cicero's rhetoric was "condemned by the judgement of students, since it is never the subject of ordinary lectures, nay rather as if a fable or craft is run through and taught privately".<sup>25</sup>

Instead, this century saw a vigorous rise in the study of dictamen and Arts of preaching; but what was salvaged from the scholastic tradition was concerned mainly with Boethius' more summary treatment of the main rhetorical themes in his fourth book of the *De differentiis topicis*. Again according to the Parisian university statutes of 1215, 1252 and 1255,<sup>26</sup> this

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22. Cf. Fredborg 1971 and 1974.

23. Cf. Ward 1978, Lewry 1983.

24. *Cartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. Denifle & Chataelain (Paris, 1889), I p. 78.

25. Thorndike p. 45.

26. *Cartularium Univ. Paris* I p. 78, 228, 278.

book was to be taught separately in the courses of rhetoric, while the three first books were reserved for dialectic - a division observed already in the twelfth century.<sup>27</sup> The extant thirteenth-century Boethian commentaries, however, leave no indication of this division and form a continuous course of all four books within the dialectical curriculum.<sup>28</sup> As one might expect, these commentators are mostly concerned with a more narrow comparison of rhetoric to dialectic, as is also evident in Robert Kilwardby's broader integration of rhetoric in his *De ortu scientiarum*.

Rhetoric is to Kilwardby a part of 'Logica', which comprises grammar dealing with the language of things known and dialectic and rhetoric dealing with the unknown (ch. 49. 468). Rhetoric serves politics, but is not a sub-science or species of politics (ch. 62. 623). Rhetoric aims at solving political problems concerning individuals, while dialectic aims at solving philosophical, universal questions (ch. 49. 471). Kilwardby heavily underlines the theoretical inferiority of rhetoric to dialectic, due to rhetoric's restriction to particulars and individuals: the rhetorical topics borrow their argumentative force from the corresponding dialectical topics (ch. 49. 473); and the rhetorician may not freely avail himself of syllogisms, but only "borrow" them from dialectic, since rhetorical reasoning does not allow for universal propositions (ch. 61. 613). From discussions between two dialecticians truth may immediately be elicited, while the orators must submit their arguments to the extraneous verdict of a judge (ch. 61. 619). Furthermore, the art of rhetoric was invented after grammar but well before logic, which was the most difficult to invent (ch. 63. 629). In the curriculum, or order of study, rhetoric appears well after grammar, logic and the

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27. Cf. N. J. Green-Pedersen, "The doctrine of 'maxima propositio' and 'locus differentiae' in commentaries from the twelfth century on Boethius' *Topics*", *Studia Mediewistyczne* 18 (1977), pp. 125-63.

28. Cf. Fredborg 1976a p. 49-51 and the catalogue of commentaries in *Diff. Top.* in Green-Pedersen 1984, Appendix B. Only the commentary by Radulphus Brito has yet been edited, by Green-Pedersen 1978.

speculative sciences and is grouped with ethics and law (ch. 63. 639). Yet Kilwardby considers some parts of rhetoric useful for all the other arts, namely style and performance, since a teacher's command of these skills enhances and facilitates his students' apprehension of all the arts (ch. 64. 647).

If the thirteenth century was mainly Boethian in inspiration, the fourteenth century may be called Aristotelian, since the introduction of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* led a number of outstanding scholars to provide it with a commentary, e.g. the Dominican theologian Guido Vernani, John Buridan, John of Jandun and Giles of Rome.<sup>29</sup> To judge from the extant manuscripts of the *Rhetoric*<sup>30</sup> and its commentaries and from the few existing references to rhetoric in the curriculum, the *Rhetoric* was taught together with the *Ethics* and the *Politics*, and as the secondary, not the principal, subject of the term.<sup>31</sup> I should like to illustrate this kind of scholastic rhetoric from the *Quaestiones super Rhetoricam Aristotelis* by John Buridan (after 1358), since he became one of the standard commentators on the *Ethics* - though I am well aware that Buridan's work on rhetoric proved much less influential than that of his predecessor Giles of Rome.<sup>32</sup>

Buridan, basing himself solidly on Aristotelian doctrine, went into great detail concerning the exact relationship between ethics, dialectic and rhetoric according to their different aims, methods and subject matter. One of the most crucial points in this respect is the range of employment of rhetorical arguments:

Quaestio I.14, *Rhetoric* Bk.1, ch.2 (1356b7)

"WHETHER ALL PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTATION CONSISTS OF ENTHYMEMES OR EXAMPLES ?

29. Cf. Fredborg 1976a with references. Three anonymous commentaries are found in 1) Ms Hereford, Cath. Lib. P.3.vi, fols. 1ra-54vb; 2) Ms Tortosa, Bibl. de la Cat. 249, fols. 156v-195v; 3) Ms Oxford, Bodl. Lib. Digby 55, fols. 178rb-180va.

30. Cf. Murphy 1974 p. 100.

31. Maieru p. 323.

32. For Giles of Rome's rhetorical commentary see the excellent study by O'Donnell. For Buridan see Fredborg 1976a.

1. No! For all agree that the rhetorician may occasionally use the perfect syllogism. Again, the advocate might otherwise lose a good case of his, since in the enthymeme there is a tacitly presupposed proposition, which occasionally might not be clear to his audience. But, if explained, it might become clear to them - however, it cannot be made clear unless it is explicitly stated (*viz.* as in the syllogism). Again, occasionally both propositions of a syllogism are deficient, and then both must be made clear to the judge, e.g. if I want to prove that Socrates should be punished for perjury, I would say: "he swore to do so, and he did not do it". Again, one should rather use the most effective and perfect arguments, and they are the syllogism and the inductive argument.

2. <Yes!> The opposite is stated by Aristotle, who says that "all orators produce belief by employing as proofs either examples or enthymemes and nothing else".

3. I say that syllogisms ought to be used more sparingly than enthymemes, and the enthymemes more frequently. For, first of all, the audience is commonly understood to be uneducated and not able to see complicated issues brought together in the same argument; nor can they grasp the subtlety of the perfect connexion between the extremes via the middle term, which a syllogism sets forth.

Again, in a perfect syllogism one of the premisses ought to be universal. But that is the proposition pertaining strictly to the science of Law, and hence the man holding judgement, that is the listener, ought to know it already if he is a sufficiently good judge; and, if he is not so, then he ought to take counsel from those who are good enough judges. But what the judge ought to know himself, should not be spelled out by the speaker. For then the listener will be confused by the length of argument, for he would seem to take on the role of the judge (who should know how to fill in <the legal premiss>) and he would seem to consider the judge ignorant, i.e. unable to fill in the legal matter.

Again, a universal proposition concerning the right course of action is normally liable to suffer several obvi-

ous exceptions, unless it is explained in great detail <viz. with the many corresponding provisos>. Consequently, if a universal proposition of a syllogism is brought forward and an exception to it turns up later, this proposition becomes less credible - and if it is fully explained, an uneducated audience cannot understand the elegant and perfect explanation.

Again, common people who rely on their senses rather than on reasoning habitually recognize cases of inferential linking through experiencing them, but do not see their causes. Now, such cases of inferential linking are enthymematic, not syllogistic. For these people see that "this usually follows that", and therefore they more readily grasp enthymemes because of their habit of experiencing and their inability to grasp the cause, which the syllogism makes explicit.

Occasionally however, it is not inconvenient to use the syllogism, e.g. if it is clear that the judge has a thorough knowledge of dialectic and is thus acquainted with the art of syllogistic, or if the subject matter in certain cases makes it necessary. But, inductive arguments should be used sparingly or, rather, not at all. For, first of all, it is difficult or impossible to enumerate all single instances (viz. pertaining to this induction). Secondly, the conclusion of an inductive argument is a universal proposition, which again the judge is obliged to supply. The speaker, however, must reach a particular, not a universal conclusion to prove his particular case, which inductive arguments do not yield. Consequently induction cannot prove his case.

Analyse the individual arguments for and against."<sup>33</sup>

Ms E = Erfurt, Amplon. 4<sup>o</sup> 319, fol.152ra-b (saec. xiv fin)

Ms L = Leipzig, U.B.lat.1246, fol.336v (saec.xv).

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33. Translated from Ms Erfurt, Ampl.4<sup>o</sup> 319, f. 152ra-b (s. XIV fin.), Leipzig, U.B. lat. 1246, f. 336v (s. XV). The latin text is printed below (revised from *Rhetorisk festskrift*, Skjern: Dafolo, 1985 p.102).

Utrum omnis argumentatio persuasiva sit enthymema vel exemplum.

1. Quod non. Quia omnes<sup>34</sup> concedunt posse uti aliquando syllogismo perfecto.

Item, aliter advocatus posset perdere causam suam bonam, quia in enthymemate propositio subintellecta<sup>35</sup> est aliquando dubia auditoribus - quae, si declararetur,<sup>36</sup> fieret eis nota, et non potest declarari bene, nisi exprimatur.

Etiam aliquando utraque propositio syllogismi<sup>37</sup> est defectiva,<sup>38</sup> propter quod oportet utramque declarari<sup>39</sup> iudici. Verbi gratia: si volo probare Socratem puniendum esse de periurio, dicam: "iuravit hoc facere et non fecit".

Item, potentioribus<sup>40</sup> argumentis est magis utendum et perfectioribus, cuiusmodi sunt syllogismus et inductio.

2. Oppositum dicit Aristoteles (Rhet. 1356b6-8): "omnes autem persuasiones faciunt per ostendere aut exempla dicentes aut enthymemata et praeter hoc nihil".

3. Dico quod rarius utendum est syllogismis quam enthymematibus et pluries enthymematibus. Quod probatur primo quia auditores communiter supponuntur simplices et non posse multa videre<sup>41</sup> connexa in eodem argumento nec possunt comprehendere subtiles perfectas connexiones extremorum in medio, quas syllogismus<sup>42</sup> exprimit.

Item, in syllogismo perfecto<sup>43</sup> portet alteram praemissarum esse universalem et illa est iuris; ideo iudex, +scilicet auditor+, si sit sufficiens, tenetur eam scire, et si de hoc<sup>44</sup> sit minus sufficiens, tum a sufficientibus in iudicando tenetur consilium accipere. Quod autem ille tenetur scire, non debet exprimi a loquente - turbaretur enim audi-

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34. non L.

35. sive intellecta L.

36. declaretur L.

37. syllogismo L.

38. defectiva: defecta E: de facto L.

39. utramque declarari: declarare L.

40. potentibus L.

41. videt E (ante corr.).

42. syllogismis L.

43. perfecto: om. L.

44. de hoc: dec vel dee EL.



tor tum<sup>45</sup> propter prolixitatem, quia †auditor† <\*\*\*> videtur usurpare sibi officium iudicis debentis<sup>46</sup> eam supplere et videtur reputare iudicem ignorantem, scilicet non valentem supplere quid iuris.

Item, propositio universalis circa agibilia non fit communiter, quin plures patiatur instantias manifestas, nisi valde dearticularetur. Si igitur proponatur propositio universalis syllogismi et subapparet instantia, fiet minus credibilis; et si dearticuletur,<sup>47</sup> non potest auditor simplex apprehendere subtilem et perfectum dearticulationem.

Item vulgares sensu utentes magis quam ratione consueverunt videre consequentias per experientias et non noverunt causas. Illae autem consequentiae sunt iam enthymematicae, non syllogisticae. Vident enim ad hoc communiter sequi illud, ideo magis apprehendunt enthymemata propter consuetudinem experientialem et impotentiam apprehendendi causam, quam syllogismus exprimit.

Conceditur tamen non esse inconveniens aliquando uti syllogismo, ut si appareat iudicem esse imbutum in dialectica et sic usitatum in arte syllogistica vel propter exigentiam aliquando materiae. Inductione autem raro vel numquam utendum est,<sup>48</sup> tum quia difficile vel impossibile est per omnia singularia discurrere, tum quia inductio concludit universalem propositionem, quam tenetur iudex supplere, et loquens debet concludere<sup>49</sup> singularem, quae non debet capi <ab> inducente.<sup>50</sup> Ideo non poterit ad eam probandam fieri inductio.

Solve rationes!

The restrictions imposed, in this account, on rhetoric by dialectic are clear: dialectic possesses the more precise and complete kinds of argument, while rhetoric is hampered by its particular subject matter and kinds of argument suited to that. The moral sciences, including Law, are equally superior

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45. tamen L.

46. debetis L.

47. articuletur L.

48. et L.

49. concludi L.

50. <ab> inducente: autem L.

in their supply of universal propositions or maxims concerning justice and proper conduct. In fact, Buridan elsewhere admits that an educated audience, e.g. the Parliament or the Papal Curia, would even prefer dialectical or ethical arguments to those of rhetoric. However, rhetoric is indispensable since it teaches the appropriate manner of argumentation dealing with the multitude of ethical and political problems not yet solved (*Quaestio I.16*).

In these illustrations of Ciceronian, Boethian and Aristotelian scholastic rhetoric I have confined the attention to some representative views on the application of rhetorical argumentation to the needs of the society and to the delineation of rhetoric in comparison to the other arts and sciences. I have further tried, somewhat cursorily, to indicate the range of classical rhetorical sources available at different periods, in order to supplement and correct the view that only the Renaissance had any access at all to Quintilian, the *De oratore* or to philological probings into the Ciceronian authenticity of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. A few 'humanist' overtones are apparent in the twelfth century, though they are firmly based upon the reading of scholastic Ciceronian commentaries. By the thirteenth century such interest is lost and rhetoric began to shift its position from Queen of the Trivium to a subsidiary subject to the instruction in Ethics.

The picture drawn here of the function of rhetoric according to the medieval scholars does not lay any claim to completeness. It should be supplemented with a study of the development of the theory of style in the Middle Ages. However, much of the more important material for such study is to be found also outside the scholastic commentary tradition, particularly in treatises on dictamen and poetics.<sup>51</sup> Here, instead, I have chosen to concentrate upon the subject of rhetorical argumentation, since this was a subject of prime importance to the commentators. More importantly, these very

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51. For the medieval theory of style, see Quadlbauer and Dronke.

considerations about the exact nature of rhetorical argument and rhetorical topics provide the focal point for understanding the medieval views on the sincerity of rhetoric, which is a subject of pivotal importance in rhetoric today also. However tenuous and slender a place has been allotted to this side of rhetoric in the intellectual history of the Middle Ages, the numerous commentaries' careful debate of the sincerity and usefulness of rhetoric exemplify the multiform adherence to what was St. Augustine's admirable plea for rhetoric in a Christian world: "that truth may clearly appear, that truth may please, that truth may move (ut veritas pateat, veritas placeat, veritas moveat." (De doctrina Christiana IV.28.61)

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