chapter seven

THE METAPHOR AFTER ARISTOTLE

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Looking at the first writings to exploit the metaphor after Aristotle’s treatment of it in the Poetics and in the Rhetoric, that is, looking in the Rhetorica ad Herennium 4.34-45, one can see that much has changed. For there is a great difference between Aristotle’s large view and the half page dedicated to the translatio (μεταφορά) by the author of the Rhetorica ad Herennium (Cornificius, in my opinion). How much time had passed? About 250 years if we date Aristotle’s Rhetoric very approximately to 332 B.C. (between 335–322 B.C. during his second stay in Athens) and consider the last book of the Rhetorica ad Herennium, where we find the translatio, which the most plausible arguments tell us was written in 82 B.C. On the other hand the Rhetorica ad Herennium was only the third Roman handbook (ars) on rhetoric after the incomplete ars written by the great orator Antony, which may be dated between 99 and 95 B.C., and Cicero’s also incomplete handbook, which is called De inuentione. This latter

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1 I defended the authorship of Cornificius in Calboli 1965 1–56 and reconsidered this question in Calboli, 1993b 1–7 and Calboli 2002 120 (where I wrote: “However, what matters in this issue is not just the possibility of giving a name to the author of the Ad Herennium, since such a name would be without any specific reference, but the fact that Quintilian, as a very competent rhetorician, knew the Rhetorica ad Herennium.”

2 That Antony’s ars was incomplete is attested by Quintilian (Inst.3.1.19 Romanorum primus […] condidit aliquam in hanc materiam [sc. in artem rhetoricam] M. Cato, post M. Antonius incohauit: nam hoc solum opus eius atque id ipsum imperfectum manet). On the other hand, the date of Antony’s incomplete ars must be put between 102 and 92 B.C. These two extremes are represented, on the one hand, by the time when Antony was politically close to Marius, i.e. in 95 B.C. when, defending Norbanus, he spoke in praise of the seditiones and, on the other hand, by the 92 B.C. intervention of the censors against the Latin rhetoricians—and it is strange that Antony wrote an ars rhetoric, his libellus, when the censors of 92 B.C. condemned this activity in Rome (see Scholz 1962 98; Calboli 1972 149f.). Of the libellus (Cic. De or.1.94) we know only the doctrine of the status, the same doctrine we find in the Rhetorica ad Herennium (cf. Calboli Montefusco 1988 197–205). It is natural that both works, Antony’s libellus and the Rhetorica ad Herennium, were written relatively close each other, Antony’s ars in 95–94 and the Rhetorica ad Herennium in 86–82.
work was written during 88–87 B.C. and so about two years before the first book of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which is dated at 86 B.C. As I have mentioned, both Antony’s and Cicero’s handbooks are incomplete. Of the first we have only a fragment referring to the theory of the *status*, and in the second there is a complete treatment of the *inventio*. In Cicero’s *De inventione* the *elocutio* isn’t discussed and neither is it at all likely that *elocutio* was taken into account in Antony’s incomplete *ars*. Therefore the first treatment of the metaphor in a Latin handbook is what we meet in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. These Roman *artes* originated from Greek treatises used as handbooks (*τέχναι*) in the Rhodian teaching schools.

The Rhodian origin of the rhetorical *τέχνη*, the mother of the *ars* that was the model for the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Cicero’s *De inventione*, deserves note because it means that these handbooks were produced in a primary centre of philosophical, rhetorical and grammatical culture where Peripatetic and Stoic philosophies and Alexandrian philology were all present. All the great scholars of Roman rhetoric and grammar went to Rhodes, including Aelius Stilon, Varro’s teacher, Antony the orator, Cicero, Caesar and the great lawyer Serv. Sulpicius Rufus. The Rhodians, after 167 B.C., the year when they feared the Romans would declare war against them as a consequence of the favour the Rhodians showed to Perseus, King of Macedon at the time of the third Macedonian war, dedicated themselves to the development of school teaching practice and even got a contribution of wheat and barley from the king of Pergamum, which they converted into money for the schools. The Rhodians had the monopoly on the grain and even the Romans acknowledged it and gave the Rhodians permission to import 100,000 medimnoi from Sicily during the war. The Rhodian educational system had also been supported by the temporary decline of Alexandria when power passed to Ptolomaeus Fison, and many scholars left for Rhodes, as did Aristarchus’ pupil Dionysius Thrax, while his master fled to Cyprus. Dionysius Thrax was the author of the earliest *τέχνη* that has come down to us (I reject Di Benedetto’s opinion that this *τέχνη* isn’t authentic, which rejection is shared by the great specialist of *τέχναι γραμματικαί*, Alfons Wouters, and many others). Of course the

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3 The Rhodians were worried by the disappearance of the Macedonian kingdom because they were crop merchants normally selling in Macedonia what they purchased in Egypt (see Meloni 1953 344–347; Schmitt 1957 144f.).

4 See Calboli 1978 103, 111.

5 I quote only Pfeiffer 1968 270–272; Fuhrmann 1960 29–34; Erbse 1980 255–