

THE MYTHOLOGICAL *EXEMPLUM* IN ANCIENT RHETORICAL THEORY AND IN THE PRACTICE OF CICERO

by

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ABSTRACT: The mythological *exemplum*, both in Antiquity and in the present times, has seldom been looked at independently from its historical counterpart. The most promising way of studying it, therefore, should consist of an investigation of the precepts discernible in rhetorical theory as well as their practical representations.

The mythological *exemplum*, although it forms part of the more universal notion (παράδειγμα) and at the same time displays its own different characteristics, has never been put under scrutiny as a separate entity. The only distinction upon which the majority of ancient rhetoricians depended in this respect is the one between a historical example and a fable. We cannot ascribe what is commonly understood by “a myth” to either of these¹. Nor does Cicero, in whose speeches allusions to Greek myth occur as often as approximately once per oration, subdivide *exemplum* into two separate categories². It comes as no surprise, then, that modern scholars’ attention has been focused almost exclusively on its historical counterpart³.

¹ See Quint. *Inst.* V 11, 20 followed e.g. by VOLKMANN 1885: 233–239 and LAUSBERG 1998: 197 f. (§ 413 f.). I would like to thank The Hardt Foundation for the Study of Classical Antiquity in Vandœuvre for granting me a scholarship in February 2015, without which many publications used below would have been beyond my reach. I am also grateful to Janek KUCHARSKI for making available to me the translation of Hermogenes and the latest edition of Aphthonius and Pseudo-Hermogenes, to Pietro VERZINA who kindly sent me photocopies of TRAGLIA’s edition of the Latin poets of the archaic period, and to Prof. Jakub PIGOŃ and the anonymous Reader for “Eos” for offering many valuable suggestions that helped to improve my paper.

² See Cic. *Inv.* I 49 and *Top.* 41–45 with OPPERMAN 2000: 9 (with n. 2), and esp. 15. There are more or less forty occurrences in twenty orations, apart from the *Verrine* speeches.

³ See e.g. VOLKMANN 1885: 233–239; ALEWELL 1912: 5–35; KORNHARDT 1936; FUHRMANN 1973: 449–452; PRICE 1975; BERGER 1984: 1031–1432 (ch. “Paradeigma und Exemplum,” at pp. 1145–1148); ROBINSON 1986: 3–16 (esp. p. 15, n. 14); VON MOOS 1996; DEMOEN 1997; LAUSBERG 1998: 197 f.; STEMMLER 2000; VAN DER POEL 2009: 333–336. Cf. KLOTZ 1942; LUCARELLI 2007. See also NORDEN 1971, *passim* (e.g. pp. 276, 284 f.); LEEMAN 1963, *passim*. The scholarship on the