

**Francesco BERARDI, *La retorica degli esercizi preparatori: glossario ragionato dei Progymnasmata***, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2017 (Spudasmata, vol. 172), 343 pp., ISBN 978-3-487-15595-1, €58.00.

The interest in *progymnasmata*, elementary exercises in the composition of minor rhetorical forms and genres, has been steadily increasing over the last decade<sup>1</sup>. In 2011, the term *progymnasmata* appeared in titles of only three papers presented during the 18<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric (ISHR)<sup>2</sup>. In 2015, during the ISHR 20<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference, there were already thirteen papers<sup>3</sup> and one separate session dedicated to *progymnasmata* or similar school exercises in rhetoric and two years later, during the ISHR 21<sup>st</sup> Biennial Conference, there were two sessions dedicated only to *progymnasmata* in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and the term itself came up in a dozen of papers. In 2018, an international conference devoted exclusively to *progymnasmata* took place in Paris (“Les *progymnasmata* en pratique de l’antiquité à nos jours”).

The latest research on *progymnasmata* was initiated by an edition of the earliest surviving textbook of Greek prose composition by Aelius Theon. Michel PATILLON, the editor of this work, as well as of textbooks by Pseudo-Hermogenes and Aphthonius’ *Progymnasmata*<sup>4</sup>, claimed in 1997 that “the interest in the *progymnasmata* manuals cannot be overstated”. This sentence in its original French „[o]n ne saurait exagérer l’intérêt des traités de *progymnasmata*”<sup>5</sup> opens a “Prefazione” by Maria Silvana CELENTANO to Francesco BERARDI’s *La retorica degli esercizi preparatori* (p. 7). Prof. CELENTANO recommends this glossary as a valuable tool (“un prezioso strumento di lavoro”) for those who want to read textbooks of *progymnasmata*, as well as for those who are interested in classical rhetoric and its influence on the writing of literary texts (p. 9). However, the question can be raised whether only this one type of composition exercises needs a separate glossary. And BERARDI (henceforth B.) answers this question in the chapter entitled “Perché un glossario ragionato dei Προγυμνάσματα” (pp. 15–25).

After this, he describes briefly the structure of exercises and other progymnasmatic terms discussed in the book (pp. 27–28). Each is presented according to the following scheme: (1) designation and definition of the exercise (“denominazione e definizione dell’esercizio”), (2) taxonomy (“tassonomia”), i.e. what is the place of a given *progymnasma* in the study process, (3) an internal division into types and/or subcategories (“classificazione”), (4) its elaboration (“elaborazione”), (5) disposition of the argumentation (“disposizione”), (6) style (“stile”) and the rhetorical purpose

<sup>1</sup> The development of studies on this topic (including editions and translation) up to 2006 is presented by M. KRAUS, *Progymnasmata, Gymnasmata*, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. VII, Tübingen 2005, pp. 159–190, and up to 2008 also by B.B. AWIANOWICZ, *Progymnasmata w teorii i praktyce szkoły humanistycznej od końca XV do połowy XVIII wieku*, Toruń 2008, pp. 18–27.

<sup>2</sup> In 2013 Francesco BERARDI was one of the ISHR Research Fellowship Recipients.

<sup>3</sup> Including BERARDI’s paper *I Progymnasmata come libri di cultura*.

<sup>4</sup> M. PATILLON, Hermogène: *L’art rhétorique. Exercices préparatoires, États de cause, Invention, Catégories stylistiques, Méthode de l’habileté*. Traduction française intégrale, introduction et notes par... , Paris 1997; IDEM, *Corpus rhetoricum*. Anonyme: *Préambule à rhétorique*; Aphthonios: *Progymnasmata*, en annexe: Pseudo-Hermogène: *Progymnasmata*. Textes établis et traduits par... , Paris 2008.

<sup>5</sup> See PATILLON, Hermogène... (n. 4), p. 42.

(“finalità retorica”) of the exercise. Such an arrangement is logical and transparent and it organises the glossary very well.

The last chapter that precedes the *glossario* is dedicated to ancient and Byzantine progymnastic sources (“le fonti progimnastiche”: pp. 31–38). B. begins here with the famous passage from the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (1436a 25) where the term προγύμνασμα appeared for the first time, but he does not mention that many scholars consider the sentence ἀναλαμβάνειν αὐτὰς κατὰ τὰ προγυμνάσματα in this passage to be a later interpolation<sup>6</sup>. The greatest advantage of this chapter is an extensive presentation of direct and indirect papyrus sources and testimonies of the rhetoric exercises in composition. Then, B. discusses, very shortly, collections of model exercises from the late imperial and Byzantine periods and, finally, the manuals of *Progymnasmata* by Theon, Pseudo-Hermogenes, Aphthonius and Nicolaus of Myra. These manuals are the main sources of our knowledge about ancient preliminary exercises, and therefore it would have been appropriate to devote to them more space, paying more attention to their development and changes over the centuries. It should be noted, however, that the author refers often to books by KENNEDY (2003) and PATILLON (2008) that discuss the topic in a greater detail.

The glossary itself (pp. 41–295) contains the following progymnastic terms arranged alphabetically by their Greek names: ἀκρόασις (*auditio*, “audizione”, “listening”), ἀμφιβολία (*ambiguitas*, “ambiguità”, “ambiguity”), ἀνάγνωσις (*lectio*, “lettura”, “reading”) – all three as *progymnasmata* present only in works by Theon and Quintilian, then: ἀνασκευή (*refutatio*, “confutazione”, “refutation”), ἀντίρρησις (*antirrhesis*, “contraddittorio”, “contradiction”), ἀπαγγελία (*expositio*, “esposizione”, “restatement”)<sup>7</sup>, γνώμη (*sententia*, “sentenza”, “maxim”), διαίρεσις (*partitio* or *divisio*, “disposizione degli argomenti”, “division”), διατύπωσις or ὑποτύπωσις (*diatyposis* or *descriptio*, “ἰποτύπῳσι”, “hypotyposis”), διήγημα or διήγησις (*narratio*, “narrazione”, “narration”), ἐγκώμιον (*laus*, “encomio”, “praise”), εἰδωλοποιία (*simulacri fictio*, “personificazione”, “apparition-making”), εἰκών (*imago*, “immagine”, “image”[sic!]<sup>8</sup>), εἰσφορὰ νόμου or νόμος (*legis latio*, “presentazione di legge”, “introduction of a law”), ἔκφρασις (*descriptio*, “descrizione”, “ecphrasis”<sup>9</sup>), ἑλληνισμός (*Latinitas*, “purezza della lingua”, “Hellenism”), ἐνάργεια (*evidentia* or *praesentia*, “evidenza”, “vividness”), ἐπιφώνημα or ἐπιφώνησις (*epiphonema*, “epifonema”, “comment / moral”), ἐργασία or ἐξεργασία (*operatio*, “elaborazione”, “elaboration”), ἦθοποιία (*allocutio*, “etopea”, “ethopoeia”), θέσις (*thesis* or *positio*, “tesi”, “thesis”), κατασκευή (*confirmatio*, “dimostrazione”, “confirmation”), κεφάλαιον (*capitulum*, “punto di sviluppo”, “heading”), κλίσις (*flexio*, “flessione”, “inflection”), κοινὸς τόπος (*locus communis*, “luogo comune”, “common-place”), μῦθος (*fabula*, “favola”, “fable”), παράφρασις (*paraphrasis*, “parafraasi”, “paraphrase”)<sup>11</sup>, περίστασις (*circumstantia*, “circostanza del discorso”, “circumstance”), πιθανότης (*probabilitas*, “credibilità”, “persuasiveness”), πρέπον (*decorum*, “decoro”, “appropriateness”),

<sup>6</sup> See also p. 229 of the reviewed book. For a discussion about the possible interpolation, see especially M. FUHRMANN, *Anaximenes: Ars rhetorica, quae vulgo fertur Aristotelis ad Alexandrum*, München–Leipzig 2000, *app. crit. ad loc.*; AWIANOWICZ, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 29 f.; KRAUS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp.

<sup>7</sup> Both present in the manuals by Theon and by Nicolaus only.

<sup>8</sup> An untypical exercise, proposed by Fronto to the young Marcus Aurelius, not present in canonical manuals of *progymnasmata*. English translation by B. is improper here; “imagine” is a verb, so it should be replaced by “image” or “picture”.

<sup>9</sup> B. (p. 117) has a wrong accent: εἰσφορὰ.

<sup>10</sup> The term “description” is more common in English translations and English literature on *progymnasmata*.

<sup>11</sup> An exercise known especially from Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria*; cf. Theon’s ἀπαγγελία (p. 218 in B.’s book).

προγυμνάσματα / γυμνάσματα (*praeexercitamina*, “esercizi preparatori”, “preliminary exercises”), προσωποποιία (*conformatio*, “prosopopea”, “personification”), σαφήνεια (*perspicuitas*, “chiarezza”, “clarity”), σύγκρισις (*comparatio*, “parallelo” or “confronto”, “comparison”), συντομία (*brevitas*, “brevità”, “brevity”), υπόθεσις (*causa* or *suppositio*, “discorso oratorio”, “hypothesis”)<sup>12</sup>, φαντασία (*phantasia* or *imaginatio*, “fantasia”, “imagination”) and χρεία (*chria* or *usus*, “aneddoto”, “chria”). Accordingly, B. presents different categories in alphabetical order: ancient preliminary exercises, their elements (κεφάλαια), virtues of style discussed especially in the context of the narration (ἑλληνισμός, πρέπον, σαφήνεια and συντομία), as well as the term προγυμνάσματα / γυμνάσματα itself.

The glossary arranged as presented above is undoubtedly helpful, but especially for those who are already familiar with the structure and history of ancient *progymnasmata* and especially of the most important manuals by Theon and Aphthonius. Useful are also two indices: *Index locorum* (pp. 321–333) and *Index verborum rhetoricorum* (pp. 335–343). In short, I can agree with Rodolfo GONZÁLEZ EQUIHUA, an author of the review of B.’s glossary in “Rhetorica. A Journal of the History of Rhetoric” (XXXVII 2019, pp. 85–87), that “solvo las matizaciones indicadas<sup>13</sup>, el glosario constituye una aportación altamente significativa en el panorama de los estudios de la retórica escolar y un instrumento validoso para el análisis histórico-crítico, literario y contextual de la literatura clásica”.

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<sup>12</sup> Once again an exercise attested only in Quintilian and Theon.

<sup>13</sup> Although I noted some other shortcomings of the book.