ISSA Proceedings 2002 – Religious Argument As Enthymeme: Aristotle, Paul, And Anselm

This essay explores some distinctive features of religious argumentation, particularly as it is carried on in a classic philosophical text. The term "enthymeme" in the title carries Aristotle's broad sense, designating rhetorical argumentation, rather than that of later rhetoricians, who stress an enthymeme's tendency to omit a premise or conclusion.

For a paradigm case of religious argumentation in philosophy an obvious choice within the Christian tradition is Anselm's reasoning in his *Proslogion*, the book containing the so-called "ontological proof of the existence of God." The list of philosophers who have struggled with Anselm's line of argument reads like a "who's who" in the field, and the book continues to attract attention up to the present day. Any anthology of classic proofs in philosophy of religion would have to include Anselm's or else give a reason for leaving it out.

Selecting Anselm requires looking back to Aristotle, along with the classical tradition generally, as the source for an appropriate rhetorical theory and thereby defines the task of this essay in the following way: first, to explore Aristotle's broad definition of enthymeme to find out how far it may serve, not only for the purposes for which Aristotle uses it, but also for ethical-political and religious argumentation; next, to look at some distinctive features of religious argumentation, first in Paul's epistles and then in Anselm's *Proslogion* proof; and finally, to study Anselm's *Proslogion* in its full rhetorical context, and to ask how it fits in with classical canons of argumentation.

1. Aristotle on the Enthymeme and the Syllogism

The concept of enthymeme has possibilities far beyond its usual humble place in contemporary argumentation theory. Although modern, as well as most classical, usage commonly identifies an enthymeme as a syllogism with a premise or conclusion deliberately omitted, Aristotle applies the word much more broadly than that when he introduces it as a technical term in the *Rhetoric*. This broad definition, however, needs to be sharpened in ethical and political terms before it

can serve as an effective tool for analyzing religious argumentation.

The best place to begin a discussion of enthymemes is where Aristotle opens his Rhetoric, with a comparison between rhetoric and dialectic. “Rhetoric,” he says, “is the counterpart [*antistrophos*] of dialectic,” and he continues in the next paragraph that enthymemes “are the substance of rhetorical persuasion” (*Rhet*.I.1: 1354a1,14. By rhetoric here Aristotle is thinking of argumentation in places such as the Athenian courts, where accusers and defendants present their cases, on their own behalf, to immense juries of citizens. By dialectic, on the other hand, he refers to a kind of classroom exercise in philosophical disputation for which his book *Topics* evidently serves as a text. In a seminar on dialectic, one student has to present a thesis (usually on an ethical or political topic), and another asks the first student a series of questions that can only be answered by “yes” or “no,” trying to involve the first student in some kind of logical difficulty (Kennedy 1991: 26).

Aristotle sees a number of important similarities between what he calls the “enthymemes” of rhetoric and the “syllogisms” of dialectic: “Both alike are concerned with such things as come, more or less, within the general ken of all men and belong to no definite science” (*Rhet*. I.1: 1354a1-3). Further, he says, both kinds of argumentation take at least some of their premises from “opinions that are generally accepted,” which he calls “*endoxa*” (*Topics* I.1: 100a30;cf. *Rhet*. I.2: 1357a13). Finally, both kinds of argumentation work “from contraries,” presenting forced alternatives. “The subjects of our deliberation are such as seem to present us with alternative possibilities” (*Rhet*. I.1: 1357a4-5). Law courts demand verdicts of guilty or not guilty, and the dialectical exercises require one student to defend a thesis and the other to attack it. Both enthymemes and dialectical syllogisms present matters in dispute. Dialectic makes its syllogisms “out of materials that call for discussion; and rhetoric, too, draws upon the regular subjects of debate” (*Rhet* I.1: 1356b37-1357a1).

On the other hand, the differences between rhetoric’s enthymemes and dialectic’s syllogisms are at least equally significant: The central distinction is that, unlike dialectic, rhetoric assumes “an audience of untrained thinkers …” so that the “enthymeme must consist of few propositions, fewer often than those which make up a normal syllogism. For if any of these propositions is a familiar fact, there is no need to mention it; the hearer adds it himself” (*Rhet*. I.1: 1357a12-13, 17-19; cf. II.21: 1395b23-27). This passage is the basis for the later notion that an enthymeme is a syllogism with one part omitted. The difference in audience, in

turn, calls for a different strategy of presentation. Whereas an audience trained in dialectic will consider only the strength of the argument itself, the audience for rhetoric will require also attention to the speaker's character and the emotions of the audience (*Rhet*. I.2: 1356a1-21). The third distinction between the syllogism and the enthymeme is rather surprising, but it seems to hold for all that: it is that Aristotle relaxes the standards for formal validity he uses with rhetorical enthymemes but not with other kinds of syllogisms. As M.F.Burnyeat points out, the Rhetoric does allow for arguments to be made "in a more relaxed way" than normal standards of cogency (*Rhet.* II.22: 1396a34-1396b1; Burnyeat 1994: 15-16), so that Aristotle's logic can accommodate this sort of flexibility. Whether Aristotle might prefer one sort of argumentation over the other is not the point, since the life context in which rhetorical arguments are put forward does not permit for the usual standards of cogency to be applied. On the basis of premises, at least some of which are mere likelihoods (at best true "for the most part" but not entirely), the juror or the legislator has to make a flat decision one way or another. As Burnyeat concludes, the jury must balance the probabilities of the two possible decisions to reach an "unqualified judgment," such as "He is guilty," or "We should go to war." The result of Burnyeat's investigation is that "nothing stands in the way of a verdict affirming that Aristotle's logic can do justice to the realities of rhetorical practice. There is no need to fault either the speaker's reasoning or his analysis of it" (Burnyeat 1994: 30).

Besides the rhetorical enthymeme and the dialectical syllogism there is also a third kind of argumentation, which from a certain point of view may be the most important of all: scientific "demonstration," or *apodeixis*, "when the premises from which the reasoning starts are true and primary, or are such that our knowledge of them has originally come through premises which are primary and true" (*Topics* I.1: 100a27-30). Both dialectical and demonstrative arguments have the same logical form; both are "syllogisms," but demonstrative syllogisms start from true premises, whereas dialectical syllogisms start from premises that may merely be *endoxa*, that is to say, just generally accepted rather than in fact true.
Demonstrative syllogism, dialectical syllogism, and rhetorical enthymeme are all useful tools for argumentation, and Aristotle does not always sharply distinguish them. For example, he sometimes speaks of the enthymeme as "a form of syllogism" (*Post. Anal*. I.1: 71a10; cf. *Rhet.* I.1: 1356b9-10), and even that it is a sort of demonstration (*Rhet.* I,1: 1355a5-7). At another place he even mentions in passing a different kind of enthymeme that does not really belong to rhetoric but

to the special sciences (*Rhet.* I.1: 1358a6-8). But the key point in all this is that Aristotle does not think that the three kinds of argumentation are all tools for doing the same thing, just in a better or worse way. On the contrary, he insists that it would, for example, be a mistake to try to use a demonstrative syllogism in all cases. "For," he says, "it is about our actions that we deliberate and inquire, and all our actions have a contingent character; hardly any of them are determined by necessity" (*Rhet.* I,1: 1357a25-27). When we are debating human actions, therefore, we need to use the proper kind of argumentation, and that may well be the rhetorical enthymeme.

Even if the rhetorical enthymeme is acceptable as an argument form for forensic, legislative, and ceremonial addresses, as Aristotle defines them, however, will it also work for religious argumentation? There are some obvious problems with Aristotle's presentation here, which have been noted in earlier studies of the relation of Aristotle's ethical and political theory to his *Rhetoric.*

In the first place, what of the ethical responsibility of the speaker? The little Aristotle has to say about this in the *Rhetoric* is not very impressive. The strongest statement comes at the start of book two (II.1: 1377b24-28): "Particularly in political oratory, but also in lawsuits, it adds much to an orator's influence that his own character should look right and that he should be thought to entertain the right feelings toward his hearers." This sounds like rather cynical advice to aspiring politicians and trial lawyers (cf. Halliwell 1994: 221), but in a city that is neither ideal nor entirely corrupt a wise politician will need to use rhetoric (C.D.C. Reeve 1996: 203). But is it too much to ask that such orators should not only *seem* to have good characters and *have* the right feelings toward their hearers but also actually have such feelings? Later rhetoricians such as Cicero and especially Quintillion are much clearer on this point than Aristotle here, but any rhetoric intended to guide religious argumentation would have to leave no doubt at all on this score.

Along with the ethical responsibility of the speaker, what of the political responsibility? The two are practically indistinguishable for Aristotle, since ethics takes place in the social order, in the *polis*. Again, Aristotle's formulations in the *Rhetoric* are somewhat disappointing on this topic. He writes that "rhetoric is a combination of the science of logic and of the ethical branch of politics; and it is partly like dialectic, partly like sophistical reasoning" (I.4: 1359b9-13). This statement can be interpreted in various ways, but any reader who inferred from it that rhetoric is to be partly logical, like the art of dialectic, and also partly

sophistical, like the ethical branch of politics, would find plenty of corroborating passages in the rest of the book.

And what of the ethical or political responsibility of the *listeners* to the discourse? As Kierkegaard remarks in his journals (Kierkegaard 1978, 5:5782), Aristotle hardly considers the responsibility of the listener at all. Much of classical Greek and Latin rhetoric does not do much better. For an account of religious rhetoric this is a fatal fault. A prophet or evangelist, for example, may get out the word, but a big part (sometimes the whole) of the responsibility for the success of the message rests on the listeners. Those who lack "ears to hear" will not hear.

2. St. Paul and St. Anselm

What is distinctive about religious argumentation, specifically within a Christian context? The next step in this essay will be twofold: first, to sketch some features of such argumentation, drawing upon what has already been found in Aristotle but using a sample passage from St. Paul; and second, to introduce a classic work of religious argumentation in the philosophical tradition, the *Proslogion* of St. Anselm.

The passage from Paul is from his first letter to the Corinthians 15:12-14 (NRSV): "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain." This passage, taken with its surrounding context, fits all of Aristotle's criteria for a rhetorical enthymeme. In common with a dialectical syllogism, the passage takes up an ethically related issue and confronts the listener with an alternative: either Christ is risen or not. Unlike such a syllogism, however, this enthymeme is addressed to people who may be uneducated and for whom, therefore, the reasoning needs to be kept short and to the point. In fact, at least one premise ("Christ was one of the dead") is a kind of *endoxon* within the Christian tradition (cf. Erikkson 1999: 275-76) and has to be supplied by the reader, making this argument an "enthymeme" in the usual sense too. Use of enthymeme is a common feature of New Testament scripture, as Vernon Robbins demonstrates in his recent article dealing with Luke 11:1-13 (Robbins 1998: 191-92; cf. Eriksson 1999: 290-91).

The whole context in I Corinthians is rhetorical. The preceding verses (9-11) support Paul's *ethos*, as do the later verses (30-32) about the risks he has run for the sake of the message. As Anders Erickson has shown (Erickson 2001: 117-19), the passage also works against an emotional backdrop of *pathos*, including fear of

damnation. That emotion then turns to joy in the following verses (20-28) when Paul bursts forth with the message of Christ's resurrection.

Much of this rhetoric could be fitted into Aristotle's delineation of enthymeme, though transposed into an early Christian setting. What drives Paul's passage is an apocalyptic urgency in view of the coming resurrection, so that the pressure of a deadline requires that an unavoidable either/or decision be made on grounds that would not be considered sufficient for a demonstrative or dialectical syllogism. Moreover, there is even a certain political tenor in the passage that Aristotle might have found congenial. For just at the time when Aristotle was writing, the polis itself, the presupposition of Aristotle's political theory, was already being supplanted by Alexander's empire. Paul, writing centuries later when the city-states had been swallowed up by empires, has to address a polis of a very different kind. When he writes to the Corinthian congregation he speaks as part of a close-knit community, sharing its fears and its joys along with its responsibilities. Unlike Aristotle's polis, however, membership in the Corinthian congregation does not exclude being part of other *poleis*, and at least according to Acts 26 Paul has no hesitation on another occasion to address, for example, a Roman governor on the strength of his membership in the Roman Empire itself.
Where Paul's rhetoric most plainly differentiates itself from Aristotle's as presented here, however, is in the long range scope of its ethical/political theory, and in the way it places the weight of responsibility for communication upon the listeners. For Paul it would not be sufficient, nor usually even relevant, to achieve the goals of Aristotle's rhetoric: for example, to win a jury verdict, a senate vote, or a round of public applause. Paul does not think he is just giving a one-shot speech, but rather that he is delivering during his lifetime, through God, an eschatological message of salvation and eternal life. Yet difficult as Paul's preaching mission may be, it is by itself still not as daunting as the part of his task he shares with his listeners, since they all, Paul included, have to take that message and go out and do it.
I shall not pursue the passage from Paul further, since others here can do that much better than I. My reason for discussing him has been simply to lay out some principles of religious argumentation as they might be taken up, for example, by another saint, St. Anselm, writing in the eleventh century of the common era. The whole world to which he writes is different from the world of Paul. A thousand years had passed, and there had been no second coming of Christ. Perhaps, one writer speculates, Anselm feels the need for "a renewed revelation of God after

his failure to appear at the millennium" (Schufreider 1994: 243). The community to which Anselm writes is also much different from Paul's. The monastery Anselm heads at Bec, in Normandy, follows the Benedictine rule of the time, requiring that all the hundred and fifty psalms be chanted aloud each week (Ward 1973: 27). Besides the canonical psalms, the monks also chant a whole host of other psalms, scripture passages, and commentaries, making their days and nights a continual cycle of prayer. By Aristotelian standards the monastery at Bec might well be called a little city-state, a polis, but one so unlike either Aristotle's Athens or Paul's Corinth as to belong almost on another planet.

Thus for a new community, and a new millennium, Anselm proposes a new form of religious argumentation, based apparently on the demonstrative syllogism. For the learned monks at Bec he had set out in the *Monologion* to write meditations proceeding *sola ratione*, "by reason alone" (Davies & Evans: 11). In the *Proslogion*, on the other hand, he makes clear from the start that he is not proceeding on any rationalistic basis. Reason will not replace faith but fulfill it: "And neither do I seek to understand so that I may believe, but believe so that I may understand" (Schufreider 1994: 323; subsequent references to the *Proslogion* text are cited simply as "*Pros*."). On this basis the *Proslogion* then begins, and in chapters two through four comes to the famous statement that God cannot be thought not to be. For, he says, speaking to God, "we believe that you are something than which nothing greater can be thought," and such a being cannot exist in the understanding alone but must exist also in reality (*Pros*.: 325). The reasoning is short and elegant, as would befit a demonstrative syllogism, and it proceeds from premises Anselm is confident his monks will immediately recognize as true. There seems to be no need for rhetorical flourishes here, no appeals to emotion or to Anselm's character, since the proof can stand on its own. Still, does Anselm really intend the premises in his deductions to stand alone, and, even if he did, would they be able to do so? Already in chapter two at least one key premise seems to be omitted (Schufreider 1994: 127-29), and as the book continues more on more premises are left for the reader to fill in, with the result that what look like demonstrative syllogisms turn out on closer examination to be what, in classical rhetoric, are usually called "enthymemes."

Nor is it the case that the inferences are so obvious as not to need to be spelled out fully. At chapter fifteen, for example, he argues that, not only is God "that than which a greater cannot be thought" but God is also "greater than can be thought" (*Pros*. 349). But how can this be? If God is greater than can be thought,

how is anyone able to think of him? If God cannot be thought, he cannot be thought of as "something than which no greater than be thought" either, and the so-called proof of God's existence in chapters two through four falls through right at the start.

3. Anselm's Proslogion as Enthymeme

The problem with fastening on the tag phrase "something than which nothing greater can be thought" is that it distorts the place of chapters two through four within the whole work. Unfortunately Anselm's Proslogion is one of those classics, such as Rossini's "William Tell" overture, that are usually recognized by a tiny snippet of thematic material but much less frequently heard all the way through. Isolating one part of the book as a piece of logic loses the rhetorical force of the work as a whole.

For Anselm is not only a more than competent logician, he is also a master of classical rhetoric. Study of the classical "trivium," including both logic and rhetoric, had been part of the curriculum revived by Lanfranc, Anselm's teacher and predecessor as abbot of Bec (Hopkins 1972: 4), and Lanfranc is known to have given lectures on the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetoric ad Herennium* (R.W Southern; cited in Henry 1967: 241). For a full understanding the Proslogion thus needs to be studied comprehensively, not only in terms of its message but also its speaker and its audience. That is to say, in Aristotle's sense, it needs to be approached as enthymeme.

Consider, after all, that title itself: Proslogion, meaning "address." A rhetorician will rightly ask: to whom is it addressed? The apparent answer is that, taken in its entirely, the book is a prayer, directed mainly to God and a few times to Anselm's own soul. Yet understanding this book as a prayer seems to make nonsense of it as a proof. After all, Anselm's God is the supreme expert and would need nothing proved to him, least of all his own existence.

A closer look at the entire work, however, resolves the confusion. In a preface Anselm tells how he came to write the book. His previous meditation of this kind, the *Monologion*, he says, he wrote at the request of the monks of his abbey, to provide for them a prayer they could use in their daily meditations, so that they would be able to grasp the interconnection of various Christian doctrines. The "complex sequence of interconnected arguments" in that work, however, proved more than the monks could handle, and he struggled to find "a single argument that required nothing for its proof but itself alone" (*Pros*.: 313). The *Proslogion* is

the outcome of that struggle. The speaker is to be the individual monk reading aloud the meditation in his cubicle. That is, as Anselm says, the book is written "in the person of one striving to elevate his own mind to the contemplation of God and seeking to understand what he believes" (*Pros*.: 313). And the individual monk is the audience, too, but not in the sense of a soliloquy (as in the *Monologion*), but rather of someone speaking to his own soul "in the presence of" God. The prefix "*pros*-" in *Proslogion* is here used in the sense of "before," or "in the presence of" (Schufreider 1994: 278).

Three key claims are made in this short preface: first, that the *Proslogion* is fundamentally different in approach from the earlier Monologion; second, that this difference consists in the *Proslogion* making only one argument; and third, that the point of view from which the *Proslogion* is written is that of a person striving to elevate his mind to contemplate God and seeking to understand what he already believes. A common misreading of this preface is to act as if the "one argument" of the *Proslogion* is the proof or proofs in chapters two through four, but that reduces the vast majority of the book to a useless appendage. M.J. Charlesworth puts forward a much better proposal, taking the phrase "a single argument" (*unum argumentum*) to refer to a "train of reasoning considered as a whole," a "formal deductive argument with a number of premises" (Charlesworth 1965: 52). This proposal, however, fails to make any clear distinction between the two books, since the *Monologion* is just as much a "train of reasoning considered as a whole" as the *Proslogion*. The *Monologion* may be more complex, but if complexity counts against the unity of a train of reasoning, the Proslogion itself cannot be said to be very unified.

The difference between the two books consists not so much in a difference in number of deductive arguments as in their fundamental purpose. As the titles indicate, they even belong to different literary genres. The *Monologion* is a meditation for a monk to mull over quietly to himself, but the *Proslogion* is a prayer "of a person striving to elevate his mind to contemplate God," using deductive proofs as an aid to that end. Anselm makes the individual proofs as strong as possible, but he includes them not for their own sake but as part of a larger plan of elevating the soul to a vision of God. As Anselm Stolz has shown, an address to God in prayer is the goal of every proof. "Every proof either must be conducted in the form of an address to God or must at least conclude in such an address" (Stolz 1967: 199). This is "argument" of a different sort from the

arguments in the *Monologion*, but it is still argument. The *Proslogion* appeals to the emotions as well as to the mind, and it challenges the one who meditates to abandon old ethical ways.

Anselm's argument as a whole thus needs to be described as enthymeme for several interrelated reasons. The "one argument" of the *Proslogion* is enthymeme in Aristotle's primary sense, first, because Anselm has had to simplify the original proofs fully worked out in the *Monologion* to fit the limited capacities of those for whom he was writing. Second, because this process of simplification requires leaving out many premises, the book is also full of "enthymemes" in the other sense of the term that later became conventional in classical rhetoric. Finally, the book is enthymeme because that is the only category that deals at the same time with proof to mind, heart, and will, to *logos, pathos,* and *ethos*. Once the concept of argument is allowed its full Aristotelian scope, including not only the demonstrative or dialectical syllogism but also the rhetorical enthymeme, there is no longer any reason to classify the book in any other way.

4. Stages Along the Mystical Way

Identifying the *Proslogion* rhetorically brings out the unity behind the diversity of literary styles in the book and thereby brings out the "one argument" toward which it is moving. The clue to the organization of the book is to be found in the sections of poetic prose that occur at critical points in the argument. In his edition Schufreider admirably preserves the poetic rhythm of the poetic sections of both the Latin and English versions of the text. These poetic sections are part of a recognizable genre of writing, of "prayers to the saints," that has a regular pattern of thematic development, and that same pattern underlies the structure of the *Proslogion*.

During the period in which he wrote the *Proslogion* Anselm also wrote for his friends a body of prayers, nineteen of which have survived and are available in Benedicta Ward's translation. What these prayers illustrate is that Anselm expressed emotions freely and subtly in poetry. Evidently the monastic practice of meditative chanting of psalms throughout the day and night created a context in which poetic prose became a natural way of expression.

Ward's research shows that Anselm's prayers have a definite pattern that carries over into the long introductory prayer to the *Proslogion*. Although the prayers vary widely in length and complexity, they typically follow most of the same successive stages (Ward 1973: 56-59): first, a withdrawal from usual occupations

into one's cubicle, then a call for shaking off sluggishness and stirring up the mind, then two stages of "compunction of the heart," and finally a conclusion, which expresses "union with God, the Blessed Trinity, in the bliss of heaven" (Ward 1973: 56). The core of the prayer is in the two stages of compunction, which are, according to Gregory the Great's *Moralia on the Book of Job*, first, when one is "shaken with fear at his own wickedness," and second, when one looks "up to the joys of heaven" and is "strengthened with a kind of hope and security. One emotion excites tears of pain and sorrow, the other tears of joy" (cited in Ward 1973: 55). Ward points out that the introductory prayer of the *Proslogion* fits much of this pattern: "withdrawal, self-knowledge, and compunction" (Ward 1973: 79). The second compunction, however, is here only "a longing for God," followed by a thanksgiving and resolution to persevere in prayer (Ward 1973 79). Chapter fourteen of the *Proslogion* "returns to the theme of longing" and the last chapters "praise God and the bliss of heaven" (Ward 1973: 81).

Ward's conclusions about this journey of the soul are highly suggestive and capable of being expanded when taken in conjunction with the logical demonstrations the *Proslogion* carries on at the same time. I am following here the division of the book proposed by Stolz, with one major modification. Stolz divides the book evenly into two halves, the first as chapters one through thirteen, where God is described as "that than which a greater cannot be conceived" and the second, chapters fourteen through twenty six, in which God is that which is "greater than can be conceived" (Stolz 1967: 194). While Stolz's division allows for the logical turning point in the book, it does not, it seems to me, do as well with the psychological turning point, which comes at chapter eighteen.

My proposal, therefore, is that the book divides, after the preface, into three parts (chapters one through thirteen, fourteen through eighteen, and nineteen through twenty six). The opening chapter's prayer expresses at first abasement for the human sinful condition generally and later some sorrow for one's own transgressions, but the main message is a request to God for enlightenment. The so-called "ontological proof" chapters come as an answer to that request, and they are followed by other chapters that define with complete assurance some very problematic topics: God's omnipotence, eternality, justness and mercifulness, and the like. At chapter fourteen, however, some of that assurance breaks down, as the monk asks why he has not experienced this and finally admits that "it is more than can be understood by any creature" (*Pros.*: 349). That chapter, in turn,

leads to the thesis in chapter fifteen, that God cannot be thought, a startling admission ("Anselm's confession"; Schufreider 1994: 209-30) that seems to overthrow everything he has been saying up until then. The following chapters move away somewhat from argumentation to express convictions in poetic prose, leading to the emotional turning point in chapter eighteen. This state is what is called, in the prayers of the time, the "first compunction" of sorrow for sin. Here the monk is overcome with "sorrow and grief," not in general terms but personally, and he pleads to God: "Cleanse, heal, focus, *illuminate* the eye of my mind so that it may behold you" (*Pros.*: 355; italics in original). From that point on, confession combines with argumentation, evoking a "second compunction" of rejoicing in the bliss of heaven and culminating in chapter twenty-six, which is a final hymn to God.

Briefly put, the argument of the *Proslogion* interweaves logical demonstration with emotional expressions of, first, grief and then finally joy, so that both logos and pathos reinforce each other and each contributes to a narrative of the ascent of the soul to God. The logical turning point comes when the monkish speaker/listener concludes that God is beyond thought, and the emotional turning point is when he abandons some of his confidence in his own uprightness (his "ethos," one might say) and becomes open to what Anselm would call wonder and joy in the love of God.

5. Aristotle, Anselm, and Paul

If the *Proslogion* is rhetorical argumentation in the tradition of Aristotle and his Greek and Latin followers, why does it differ so widely from them in arrangement? How does a pupil of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* come to compose an argument that seems to lack every standard part of a persuasive speech?

Part of the answer is that these parts are there, although not in a usual way. The *Proslogion's* preface serves as an *exordium*, helping to establish Anselm's credibility. The only difference is that it is the monk, not Anselm, who will actually be delivering the speech. That preface also serves as a *narratio*, stating the theme of the argument that will follow. The opening prayer, in chapter one, works as a *partitio* to lay out the outline of the speech, but so subtly that it may pass unnoticed. The *probatio* or proof itself begins with a refutation of the hypothetical opponent (the fool who says in his heart "there is no God") and then goes on for most of the rest of the speech. Although it looks as if there cannot be a *peroratio* at the end summing up all what has been shown, because so many theses have been proposed, the speech does conclude by reaching the goal of its one

argument. Anselm has clearly done his homework using whatever handbooks of classical rhetoric were on hand.

Another part of the answer has to be that the stock outline for a courtroom, parliamentary, or public occasion speech, as found in the handbooks, simply would not fit the occasion. When both the speaker and the audience admit they are totally guilty, and then both the speaker and the audience turn out to be the same person, the canned forensic oration does not work. When scores of theses have to be brought up and proven, when the only known opponent is purely hypothetical, when the person to be praised is God, and when the speech is expected to be delivered over and over again, day after day, week after week, by the same speaker to the same audience, in the privacy of one's own cubicle, the best plan may be to scrap the old rules for speech writing and start over.

But the decisive part of the answer is that Anselm has been tutored not only by Aristotle and his school but also by the apostle Paul, through reading scripture as well as by way of Augustine. For both Anselm and Paul argumentation is a corporate experience; the speaker presenting the argument and the audience hearing it are to be persuaded together, by God. Both of them think the root problem is ethical/political, human sin, and the only solution has already been provided by what God had done. The result is that in a typical passage from Paul, as in the *Proslogion*, the dominant pathos is a transition from despair to joy. Anselm's monks at Bec may or may not have shared Paul's sense of urgency about a second coming in their generation, but they nonetheless prayed "without ceasing," in their own way. Because Anselm and Paul have all this in common, they can, while sharing much with the classical rhetorical tradition, share even more with each other.

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