**BEYOND DEFENCE:**

**RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN PAULUS OROSIUS’S**

***LIBER APOLOGETICUS***

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**Abstract**

This paper explores the argumentative structure of Paulus Orosius’s *Liber apologeticus* within the context of classical *apologia*. Drawing on Sharon D. Downey’s analysis of classical apologia, the research underscores the work’s adherence to classical rhetorical strategies suitable for this literary genre. Orosius follows a classical speech structure, incorporating elements from rhetorical textbooks like Cicero’s *De inuentione*. The analysis reveals Orosius’s division of the argument into defence and accusation, organized around *status coniecturae.* It is also presented how Orosius employs a comparative mode of argumentation, contrasting biblical events with Pelagius’s ideas, supported by emotional appeals and *exclamationes*. Another important feature of Orosius’s discourse is the frequent use of invective. In summary, my paper provides original insights into Orosius’s argumentative strategies, emphasizing the unique characteristics of the *Liber apologeticus* within the classical tradition of *apologia*.

**Keywords**

Paulus Orosius, apology, classical rhetoric, Pelagian heresy, *Liber apologeticus*

**1. The Historical Circumstances in which the Text was Produced**

Paulus Orosius, after leaving Spain in the year 414, spent some time in the company of Augustine, from whom he garnered praise for his religious zeal and intellectual curiosity[[1]](#footnote-1). However, he left North Africa for Palestine in the early months of 415 with the scholarly intention of studying under Jerome at Bethlehem, as suggested to him by Augustine. On reaching Palestine, he made contact with Bishop John in Jerusalem and then met Jerome in Bethlehem. The details of these meetings are not precisely dated, but they took place in the early months of 415. In July 415, Orosius was summoned to a diocesan meeting in Jerusalem. This event drew him away from his scholarly pursuits and forced him to take part in the Pelagian controversy, a task for which he was more than prepared by Augustine and Jerome. In fact, Orosius’s trip to Palestine might have been planned not only as a scholarly endeavour but also as part of a strategic initiative against Pelagius and his followers[[2]](#footnote-2). Although Orosius declined the role of formal accuser of Pelagius at this meeting, he was *de facto* considered to be one. His arguments, especially those relating to the authority of Augustine and Jerome, did not find the willing ear of John, Bishop of Jerusalem. His case at the July meeting was made more difficult by his lack of competence in Greek and the alleged unreliability of the local interpreters. His account also suggests that John of Jerusalem considered him to be associated with Jerome, with whom John had a history of hostility, whereas Pelagius seemed to enjoy the bishop’s sympathy. Orosius’s position at this meeting, which he himself presented in the *Liber apologeticus*,may suggest that he did not want the “Pelagian case” to be reopened and re-examined by John of Jerusalem, but expected that the Eastern bishops would simply confirm the verdict against Caelestius issued in Carthage in 411 and apply it to Pelagius[[3]](#footnote-3). The situation escalated further on 12 September 415 during a meeting with Bishop John in which Orosius was accused of blasphemy. This event prompted the writing of the *Liber apologeticus*, probably in the autumn of 415, before the synod of Diospolis, as a response to John’s accusations and as a broader critique of Pelagian doctrine. This work remains our main source for these events, and the only one directly preserved[[4]](#footnote-4). It should be noted, however, that Orosius and his audience understood very well that his work was moving within the rhetorical field of probability and not the theological realm of truth, hence his arguments were, and still ought to be, evaluated from the standpoint of their persuasiveness, not their truthfulness.

**2. The Genre of the *Liber* *apologeticus***

The awareness of what we now call a literary genre was taught in ancient schools, both through the bits of theory included in the introductory rhetorical exercises called *progymnasmata* and through school practice. In the Latin tradition, this awareness may also have come from reading Cicero’s rhetorical writings. One of the two main mentors of Orosius, Jerome, speaks of it in his *Apologia aduersus libros Rufini* 1,16[[5]](#footnote-5). He instructs his adversary to read *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which he wrongly includes among Cicero’s writings *De inuentione*, *De Oratore* and *Orator*, from which Rufinus will learn that one writes historiography differently, speeches differently, dialogues differently, letters differently, commentaries differently. We should take into consideration the remarks concerning genre formulated by the authors of *Apologetics in the Roman World* in the introduction to their volume, where they observe, “Genre is […] best seen as a way of talking about the strategies of writers (and readers) in different cultural traditions and particular contemporary situations”[[6]](#footnote-6). Hence, when speaking of the genre of the *Liber apologeticus*, we ought to consider not only the tradition of *apologia* but also the individual properties of this particular text that were, after all, dependent on the immediate context of its production. This is where rhetorical analysis is absolutely essential.

*Apologia* in classical Greek is a technical term that simply means a speech in defence delivered in court. *apologia* did not begin its career as the name of a literary genre probably until the Sophists arrived at the stage. Gorgias’s *Apology of Palamedes* and *The Praise of Helen* would certainly need to be considered as strong candidates for marking the beginning of its history. Although the *Apology of Palamedes* was written on behalf of a dead and legendary character, the author uses it as sort of exercise in *prosopopoeia* – speaking from a first-person perspective. Later, after the death of Socrates, more and more people began to write down their more or less fictional accounts of his death and present his defence speech. The most coveted and revered example of this line of apologies was the masterpiece of philosophical and literary fiction that is Plato’s *Apology of Socrates*. Yet the ancients were divided as to the genre qualification of this text. Dionysius of Halicarnassus presents a somewhat astonishing verdict on the issue:

There is one forensic speech by Plato, the Apology of Socrates; but this never saw even the threshold of a law-court or an open assembly, but was written for another purpose and belongs to the category neither of oratory nor of dialogue[[7]](#footnote-7).

Perhaps it was this genre indeterminacy that led to the popularity of the *Apology of Socrates* as a model for defence against criticism in antiquity and, in particular, for defence against charges of heresy written by various Christian writers. After all, the main charge against Socrates also concerned the issue of a serious error in religious attitude. The defences of Socrates, however, had a life of their own:

[Because of the popularity of] *controuersiae* and other declamatory exercises in which writers offered their take on what a famous historical figure could or should have said at some pivotal moment in their life, we should not be surprised that composing a “Socratic defense” was a favorite exercise for writers in antiquity[[8]](#footnote-8).

Sharon D. Downey, in her very thought-provoking study on the evolution of apologia as a literary genre, presents some of the markers of *apologia* in classical antiquity. First, a literary *apologia* is always preceded by an attack in some form, most often an accusation[[9]](#footnote-9). It is worth supplementing this thought with the observations of Anders-Christian Jacobsen, who rightly notes that these attacks “could be explicit or implicit, they could be real or constructed by the author himself”[[10]](#footnote-10). Downey believes that the general rhetorical stance in classical *apologia* was vindicative, which is why there is so much blaming of others and denigration of accusers in the defence speeches of, for instance, Demosthenes. Let us keep this in mind, for it is an important feature of late antique Christian *apologia* as well, such as that of Orosius. Downey also lists six devices which she calls “stylistic”, some of which are related to argumentative structures rather than to style *sensu stricto*. Thus, in classical apologies, we see tendencies: 1. to use conditional sentences, 2. to introduce new lines of argument by means of the interrogative form, 3. to make frequent use of an argument based on comparison, 4. to focus on counterattack and invective against the accuser, 5. to make direct references to the audience, 6. to reveal explicitly one’s strategy of defence[[11]](#footnote-11).

Such is the nature also of Orosius’s apology, as we will try to prove. These features of apology may explain why Antonio Antonaci sees a resemblance between the *Liber apologeticus* and a speech, and even suspects that the text was first delivered and then written down, pointing to certain features typical of orality[[12]](#footnote-12). In light of the above, Antonaci’s remarks may be read as a confirmation of the high quality of Orosius’s rhetorical skills rather than a valid historical insight. Ancient apology was meant to look like a speech, even if it was not a piece of real-life oratory, and that is what Orosius has provided us with. The text of the *Liber apologeticus* bears such a title in four manuscripts, but in the fifth, dated to the 14th century, it is entitled *Liber apologeticus contra Pelagium de arbitrii libertate*[[13]](#footnote-13). We also have an earlier work by Jerome, one of Orosius’s champions, which also has various titles in the manuscripts: e.g., *Hieronymi pro se contra accusatorem defensio* or *Apologia Hieronymi aduersus Rufinum*. We do not know whether these titles came from the authors themselves, but they alone allow us to see that, according to the educated elites in late antiquity, an important feature of an *apologia* was its accusatory character, which is consistent with Downey’s observation.

Finally, we must acknowledge the existence of early Christian apologies from the second and third centuries defined as

a genre of literature that combines elements from classical forensic apology and deliberative address. It is distinguished from formal apology in the sense that it is not meant to be a speech delivered in an actual law court at a criminal trial, but rather uses the law-court scenario as a venue to make what is essentially a deliberative or protreptic argument[[14]](#footnote-14).

Taking all this into consideration, we should see that Orosius’s decision to dedicate so much space in his apology to denouncing Pelagius and his teaching may be justified by the boundaries of the literary genre he chose. His apology did not serve only to vindicate his person but was meant as a counterattack as much as it was a deliberative speech to persuade all audiences that the real heretic was not Orosius but Pelagius.

**3. *Dispositio*: Structure of the Text**

Craig L. Hanson, in the introduction to his translation of the *Liber apologeticus*,divides the text into two parts: chapters 1–9 deal with the historical circumstances of the conference of Jerusalem and Orosius’s justification of his own ideas and deeds; chapters 10–33 are devoted to the depiction and rebuttal of views attributed to Pelagius[[15]](#footnote-15). Hanson then divides the first chapters into three smaller pieces, but does not label them. He even observes the resemblance of chapters 3–6 to the rules of *narratio* as presented by Quintilian. The appropriateness of specifically referring to Quintilian in the rhetorical analysis of texts written at the beginning of the fifth century, when the primary reference books were Cicero’s *De inuentione* and, to a lesser extent, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, is a subject for a long article[[16]](#footnote-16), but it is worth examining the composition of the *Liber apologeticus* precisely through the lens of the popular rhetorical textbooks of the time. Here we see a structure in which some paragraphs play a dual role simultaneously – some paragraphs still belong to one section in the earlier parts, with the later parts belonging to another section:

1. Prooemium/exordium (Paragraphs 1–2)
2. Narratio (2–9)

2–6 on Jerusalem’s July assembly

7–9 on being accused by bishop John in September

1. Diuisio/partitio (9)
2. Argumentatio[[17]](#footnote-17) (9–32)

9–11 **Defence,** **Quaestio 1**: Did I say the words “Man cannot be without sin even with the assistance of God”?

11 **Accusation,** **Quaestio 2**: Is Pelagius sincerely claiming that God’s assistance is needed in being sinless?

12–18 **Accusation,** **Quaestio 3**: Can man or only God be without sin?

19–21 **Defence,** **Quaestio 4**: Did I deny the assistance of God?

21–28 **Accusation**, **Quaestio 5**: Has there been someone sinless with God’s assistance?

21–24 **Quaestio 5,1**: How does Scripture express sinlessness?

24–28 **Quaestio 5,2**: God can do everything but he still does not do some things for other reasons

29–30 **Defence**, **Quaestio 6**: Do we claim that God created an evil human nature?

30–33 **Defence**, **Quaestio 7**: Can people bear the burden of the law?

1. Peroratio/conclusio (33)

**4. *Inuentio*: Patterns of Argumentation**

4.1. *The Overarching Strategy*

To understand the general, overarching argumentative strategy within the *Liber apologeticus*, we need to analyse the pivotal part of the whole text, the *diuisio*/*partitio*[[18]](#footnote-18):

[…] A) I am free from this or any such statement: free by your faith, free by my conscience. And after first B) examining the ambiguous meaning of the statement itself, I will attempt to discover how those who allege that I spoke thus seem to have brought this action against me. Perhaps through this mode of inquiry, the secret of their doctrine will be exposed, so that by trading blow for blow, as it were, the missiles, when returned with greater accuracy, may punish the original attacker[[19]](#footnote-19).

Here Orosius shares the exact plan that he wants to use in his apology. He starts with A) an outright denial according to the lines of *status coniecturae* that he ever made the statement he was accused of; he does this in paragraphs 7,3 and 8,4 and later:

I here call upon God as my soul’s witness, that in your aforementioned assembly I did not pronounce any blasphemy from my mouth and did not make any such statement as the one Bishop John has accused me of: namely, that even with God’s assistance a person cannot be without sin[[20]](#footnote-20).

The whole idea underlying the argumentative structure of the *Liber apologeticus* and, specifically, his quick shift from defence to accusation – from A) to B) – is his claim that the accusation against Orosius was orchestrated by the cunning Pelagius. This idea is signalled already early on in the text but is best summed up in 28,10–11:

And now you want […] people in this present age to respond to something never before found stated in the holy writings: that any person is without sin. And if, by chance, they have agreed on this point, you want them to endorse such on this very day and at this very moment! You are constructing here a new stratagem of sophistry, in order that we appear to have said that what we say does not happen, could not happen[[21]](#footnote-21).

Here, Orosius insists on the existence of a causal relationship – the instigator behind the whole accusation was Pelagius, who, while unable to find scriptural grounds for his claim on the possibility of sinlessness that, as he knew, had already been established as heretical in North Africa, decided to accuse Orosius, through the person of authority, of the opposite claim, namely that being sinless is not possible. The metaphor of trading blow for blow and returning the missiles with great accuracy is justifying his shift into accusatory mode and is a clear reference to the subtype of *status coniecturae* called *anticategoria*,in which the accused reverses the charge. According to the classification of Heinrich Lausberg, it is a special type of *quaestio comparatiua*, which “provides a choice between two *auctores* of the same deed (‘*utrum hic an ille fecerit*’)”[[22]](#footnote-22)so the main question of the whole text is now not, “Has Orosius committed heresy concerning the state of human sinlessness?”, but rather, “Is it Orosius or Pelagius who has committed a heresy?”

To sum it all up, Orosius divides his argument into defending himself against the charge of heresy by accusing Pelagius of heresy. These two movements, one defensive, the other accusatory, are intertwined throughout the *Liber apologeticus*, as is often the case in the genre since the time of Plato’s *Apology of Socrates*. The whole polemical discourse, however, is very neatly organised around particular *quaestiones* that are mostly deliberative rather than forensic in nature and hence are discussed mostly in the light of scriptural passages. In *De inuentione* 1,44–1,50, Cicero informs us that there are two general types of argumentation – necessary and probable. All early Christian polemics used the probable argumentation that Cicero divides into four types: *signum*, *credibile*, *iudicatum*, *comparabile*. Among those, Orosius uses mostly the last two – *iudicatum*[[23]](#footnote-23) and *comparabile*[[24]](#footnote-24), and rarely *credibile*[[25]](#footnote-25). In the early Christian discourse under *iudicatum* one locates the arguments with quotations from Scripture and earlier Christian writers as the basis for rejecting or confirming a charge or a thesis, hence the exegetical and the patristic argumentation. That is also the case in the *Liber apologeticus*. The comparative argument can have various forms; one can compare two ideas, actions, or persons, one by one or grouped. Comparisons, by default, may present similarity, dissimilarity, or opposition. They often take the form of *a maiori ad minus* (e.g., comparison between the Apostles and Jesus and the heretic) or *a minori ad maius* (e.g., comparison between the pagans or Jews and the Christians)[[26]](#footnote-26). Within this comparative pattern one could also present *exempla* that strengthen or weaken the case by referring to particular historical events. *Exempla* in anti-heretical discourses are mostly used to show how the alleged heretic’s words or actions contradict the actions of the prophets, apostles, or Jesus himself. We can now look closer at the patterns of argumentation with the specific seven *quaestiones* around which the argument of the *Liber* *apologeticus* was organised.

4.2. *Quaestio 1: Did I say the words “Man cannot be without sin even with the assistance of God”?*

Orosius’s defence against this charge is a typical part of *apologia* taken from the clear-cut form of a forensic speech that most apologies try to adopt: the formulation of a charge and the formulation of a line of defence. This formulation fits the *status coniecturae*: *An fecisti? Non feci*. Orosius wants to prove that he did not say that even with God’s assistance a person cannot be without sin. To this end, he picks some arguments suitable for *status coniecturae* as presented in, for example, *De inuentione*, the most used handbook of rhetoric in the Latin West at that time. In this *status*, Cicero recommends using arguments drawn from three categories – *causa*, *persona*, *factum*[[27]](#footnote-27).

Let us discuss Orosius’s line of defence accordingly. The arguments drawn *a causa* are dedicated to analysing the intention of the agent. The action can be either well-reasoned and prepared (*ratiocinatio*) or spontaneous and based on emotions (*impulsio*)[[28]](#footnote-28). Here, Orosius argues that he had no reason to say what he is accused of because “all persons who are endowed with outstanding faith and wisdom or who in another way hold this belief – namely that God can do all things – do revere it, believe it, confess it”[[29]](#footnote-29). He also claims that everyone who says such things in order to undermine the omnipotence of God “not only ought to be anathematized […], but also punished […] by divine fire”[[30]](#footnote-30). However, Orosius spends more time laying out an argument *a causa* concerning the agent behind the accusation. He tends towards the use of *ratiocinatio* and suggests that it was Pelagius’ desire to exonerate himself of heresy that led to this accusation (10,1).

Orosius also argues *a persona*. First of all, he focuses on the person of bishop John. He claims that his direct accuser could not really understand Latin and hence could not have known what Orosius had actually said: “How did a Greek who lacks knowledge of the Latin language understand a Latin-speaking person?”[[31]](#footnote-31) He also observes that John did not accuse him of blasphemy right away but after 47 days and that he did not even warn him in order to give Orosius opportunity to correct any mistake. That casts a shadow on the good-will of the accuser. Next, he observes that he cannot really explain the motive of John of Jerusalem: whether he had believed the false translation without giving it a thought (*temere credita*), or whether he had himself misrepresented it out of malice (*malitiose ficta*), or had heard something imprecisely and not understood it (*ignare subaudita*), and so he leaves it to God to analyse and judge (8,2). He, of course, would prefer that the interpreters had erred rather than that the bishop had lied, but that claim of Orosius may have been issued only tactically or, even worse, ironically. In this strand of argumentation the two types of agent’s motivation – *ratiocinatio/impulsio* –are, again, hinted at. Finally, he argues based on his own person. He describes himself as a poor, anonymous sinner attacked by a Goliath.

In accordance with the precepts of the theory of status, Orosius does not neglect the third category of argument, namely *a* *facto*. Here Cicero recommends mentioning time, place, and circumstances (*De inuentione* 2,40). In this manner, Orosius argues that it is easily understandable why he was falsely accused in Jerusalem, since “[n]o one should be surprised at this point that there are false witnesses in Jerusalem and that they are being sought out by priests and senior clerics”[[32]](#footnote-32). This arrogant remark is supplied by the *exempla* of persons who found themselves in a similar situation: St. Stephen and Jesus Christ, Susanna and Naboth (8,2–9,1).

Orosius also dedicated some space to discussing the ambiguity of the formulation of the charge issued against him. He observes that someone might understand it as if Orosius had denied the omnipotence of God. Here, Orosius easily dismisses this understanding by using a *catena* of scriptural quotations proving many divine miracles done *ex potestate Dei* (9). Straight afterwards, and quite suddenly, Orosius invokes Lk 18,27 and Jn 15,5, where Jesus highlights the omnipotence of God and the weakness of the human state (10). Employing a typical device of apologetic discourse as analysed by Sharon D. Downey, namely a rhetorical question to introduce a new line of argumentation, Orosius asks with a touch of invective: “Therefore, he who can do everything, can do all things as regards a human being. And yet, why does mere dust and ashes [i.e., Pelagius] hold himself so proud as to say, ‘A human being is able’, when only God is?”[[33]](#footnote-33) In that way, this very short defence ends abruptly with an accusation, which demonstrates clearly that what we have here is the form of *anticategoria.*

4.3. *Quaestio 2: Is Pelagius sincerely claiming that God’s assistance is needed to be sinless?*

Beginning the next line of argumentation, Orosius sets a comparison between Pelagius and himself and, also, between their alleged claims. This he does to defend himself against the accusation by reducing it *ad absurdum* and to move on to accusing Pelagius of heresy and hypocrisy in paragraph 11. There he accuses Pelagius of opportunistically and deceitfully contradicting his real teaching by claiming that God’s assistance is needed in being sinless. In his works Pelagius wrote that a man can easily be without sin but that, during the meeting in Jerusalem, he claimed that a person can be sinless with the help of God. A feigned dialogue between Pelagius and Orosius is concluded by pointing at the irrationality of Pelagius’s supporters – even what he did not say in his works is considered by them to be present there, because he did not deny it. In that vein, so too Orosius is considered to have said something that he did not, because he did not outright deny it: “among your kind […] it is the case that not to have denied it means to have said it, and to have kept silent means to have proclaimed it”[[34]](#footnote-34), and a bit later: “I do concede that in your case, you think that what you did not say at all ought to be interpreted as said”[[35]](#footnote-35).

4.4.*Quaestio 3: Can man or only God be without sin?*

However, at the outset of the discussion of the next issue, Orosius explicitly states that he does not want to dwell on the hypocrisy of Pelagius because this has already been done by Augustine and Jerome, who had argued that Pelagius would hide his real ideas in the deliberate ambiguity of words and that when pressed he had the tendency to contradict himself in order to avoid being convicted[[36]](#footnote-36). His plan is to present and extend the line of argumentation concerning the issue signalled in 10,2 and most provocatively presented here at the beginning of paragraph 12, where the *probatio* finally starts in full: “You say, ‘a person is able’; I say, ‘God is able’”[[37]](#footnote-37). The formal pattern of this section is repetitive. In six out of seven paragraphs the *sermocinatio* opens the argument, where Orosius either quotes or puts some words into the mouth of Pelagius. Some of these lines are so self-accusatory and arrogant that it is impossible Pelagius ever uttered such words. These Pelagian ideas are shown as contradicting Scripture. Orosius opens the discussion by furnishing plenty of biblical *exempla* to show that only God can act *contra naturam.* One might or even should observe that this is not what was supposed to be demonstrated. The *quaestio* was not whether man or God can act against nature but whether either of them can be without sin. But that difference is something that will evade most readers, because in a fashion typical for the enthymeme – the so-called rhetorical syllogism – Orosius hides the major premise: being without sin is against nature.

Next, Orosius keeps to the comparative mode of argumentation mixed with the invectives:

The Lord Christ judges it to be worthy of the highest reward of faith if someone believes that the Son of God can do such things; and yet our man from Britain is confident that he can accomplish it as soon as he has willed it! To the paralytic man who had faith, the Lord declares, “Son, be of firm resolve, your sins are forgiven you”. And now this new teacher and attendant of tables has dared to presume the remission of sins on the basis of his own power—he does not even wait to hear from God! The [Jewish] scribes, not understanding the truth, grumble and say [to Jesus], “Who is able to forgive sins but God alone?” Yet this man [Pelagius] judges that sins, about which he does not even know that God has forgiven them, are erased[[38]](#footnote-38).

I have quoted this passage in full because it demonstrates very well the formal aspects of Orosius’s argumentation found throughout the text. We find here a chain of single *synkriseis* introduced in a form resembling (albeit not perfectly) a dialogue. In each of them, Orosius opposes biblical passages or biblical events with the ideas and actions he ascribes to Pelagius in a pattern from the greater to the lesser: some great authority claims or does something while Pelagius claims or does something opposite to that. The opposition between Pelagius and the Bible is underlined by the use of *exclamationes*, devices that are supposed to raise anger against him. Finally, Orosius never tires of introducing Pelagius onto the stage by using varied descriptive labels that are taken from the repertoire of the ancient invective. There are three types of these labels found throughout the text: 1) direct insults, 2) allusive labels 3) ironical labels. Here we find the allusive one: “*nouus magister ministerque mensarum*”[[39]](#footnote-39) and the ironical one: “*Britannicus noster*”.

One of the main aims of the chosen tactic is to shed some light on the inherent ambiguity of the issue. Here the ambiguity lies in the temporal aspect of the phrase “*sine peccato esse*”. If we were to understand “*sine peccato esse*” as an occasional state of a human being, from time to time, then the claim that man can be sinless would be true. If we were to understand “*sine peccato esse*” as a continuous state right up to death then, even for those whose sins have been cleansed by baptism, Orosius does not believe the claim to be true (13). The reason for this is the existence of the final judgement (1 Cor 4–5) and the existence of hidden sins of which we learn, e.g., in Ps 51,4.

In paragraph 14, in another *sermocinatio*, Orosius kindly “allows” Pelagius to specify his claim, that only after a sinner has lamented can he begin to be sinless. To refute this specific claim, again, a chain of biblical examples is put forward. Orosius demonstrates that Zacchaeus, David, and Paul, although they lamented their sins, still needed God’s mercy, and hence were apparently not sinless. In paragraph 15, he picks up the theme from paragraph 13 and quotes a chain of biblical passages to interpret them mostly allegorically in order to prove that Christ’s judgement awaits everyone and that, at his court, everyone would need his mercy. In terms of argumentative pattern, Orosius thus builds the premise for the following enthymeme of the type of *iudicatum*: if everyone awaits God’s judgement and during this judgement everyone needs his mercy to be saved, it means that everyone has sinned.

After proving this, he can now (paragraph 16) attack Pelagius with direct invectives in the form of insulting labels, calling him the harbinger of the Antichrist. What follows is the ironical *sermocinatio* presenting Pelagius as an ambitious and arrogant man who thinks of himself as worthy of sitting next to Christ as his colleague on the judicial throne, to be his equal. If the reader believes that Pelagius thinks of himself as equal to Christ, then it is only natural that what we see next is a chain of comparisons between Jesus and Pelagius. They all follow the pattern of greater-to-lesser and are accompanied by “witty” comments in the form of exclamations. To quote just the first:

The Lamb of God, the Son of God, in order to receive the book from the hand of his Father, offers the marks of his sufferings, not considering his victory as complete except as embodied in his death and resurrection. And yet my “fellow without sin” claims that the achievement of a pure life can come to him as he is eating, drinking, and sleeping![[40]](#footnote-40)

In this passage, Orosius quite cleverly uses labels to present Pelagius as being close to the pagan philosophers: *apathes noster*, *anamartetos meus*. Orosius also adds embodied invectives. This series of *synkriseis* is followed by a chain of anaphoras, again including invectives. To give one example:

He imagines that he has been honored with the spirit of the fear of God, by which, after a great amount of intoxication, he was very recently awakened and now adds, “it is possible for a person to be without sin—but not without the assistance of God”. As a result of these “spirits”, as I think, he does not shrink from ascending to such a height of presumption, that he says that, by his own perfect power, the fullness of the Holy Spirit descended upon him after the manner of Christ and remained in him completely[[41]](#footnote-41).

Paragraph 17, again, opens with a *sermocinatio* in which Pelagius objects to the slippery slope argument of Orosius by insisting that he never compared himself with Jesus. Orosius refutes this claim by referring to the contradiction between his humble words said when pressed and the meaning of his writings: “*aliter sensus tuus clamat in paginis*”. Orosius rephrases the main *quaestio*: “You say that a person can be without sin. I repeat over and over: the person who can do this is Christ”[[42]](#footnote-42), and he suggests that Pelagius either take the name of Christ or withdraw from his ideas. The standard tactic is employed in what follows. A chain of biblical passages highlighting the actions of the grace of God and its necessity for every human being is concluded by explanations. These are formulated in the style typical of apology comprising conditional clauses and in comparative mode from greater to lesser: e.g. if apostles claim so, how can any man claim otherwise; if the apostles need the divine light, how much more do “ignorant men” of later times need them.

In the last paragraph (18) dedicated to *Quaestio* 3, Orosius adds another type of probable argument to the one called *iudicatum*,namely *credibile*, i.e., the one corroborated by everyday life experience and folk psychology. In this chain of examples from everyday life, he suggests that every person who excels in some virtue has some lacks and vices connected to it, such as calm people usually being lazy, the learned being boastful. The only way for moral progress is through awareness that we are sinful and through openness to the actions of grace. But even if we acknowledge and show our gratitude for grace, we must still face the judgement of God, as the biblical passages, introduced here again, prove. The passage ends with two *synkriseis* in which Pelagius again is negatively compared to Paul: “The Apostle Paul has said that even he will stand before the judgment seat of God and give back the appropriate things for what he has done in the body, together with everyone else”. Pelagius, on the other hand, boldly dares to say, “I am achieving such complete perfection in the flesh that I hope for no generosity whatsoever from the Judge”[[43]](#footnote-43). The second comparison concerns Pelagius’s alleged arrogance and the humility of the righteous people at the final judgement from Mt 25,37.

4.5. *Quaestio 4: Did I deny the assistance of God?*

Paragraph 19 opens with another *prolepsis* in the form of *sermocinatio*,in which the figure of Pelagius objects to Orosius’s insults and attacks by insisting that the only way in which man can be sinless is with God’s assistance. Then he formulates the charge: “Or do you, perhaps, deny God’s assistance?”[[44]](#footnote-44) In accordance with the features that Downey found typical for the genre of apology, Orosius informs us about his argumentative strategy:

I do defer briefly to your fallacious claim so that, while I may seem to reveal in myself that which I wish to expose in you, I might be found to be more cleared of blame in my defense and you might be found to be more obvious in your confusion[[45]](#footnote-45).

Hence, we are informed by the author himself that his defence will be mixed with accusation. As far as the structure of argument is concerned, Orosius starts by presenting his thesis that – he claims – he has always sustained and believed to be true, namely, that God’s grace cannot be narrowed down to the good nature of man, the example of Christ, and the institution of the Church, as Pelagius and Caelestius allegedly claim, but works individually in each man at all times. The form of the *sermocinationes* suddenly changes – instead of referring to Pelagius in the third person, we now enter into the realm of a direct *sermocinatio* in which Pelagius is “you” instead of “he”. This shifting between the third and the second person is used throughout the apology and is typical also for the *Apology of Socrates*. Apart from that formal shift, we still find the same forms of argument as before – the chain of passages and examples from the Bible is used to prove the thesis and present Pelagius as opposing them. Orosius makes an effort to substantiate the thesis about the actions of grace on the basis of the Old Testament. This is, again, an enthymeme. By logical necessity, if he proves the more difficult thesis – that God’s grace worked individually and in all the moments of human life before the coming of Christ, then it also must have been so after the incarnation. This line of defensive argumentation concludes in 21,4, a fact announced by the author himself: “The fallacy of this blind, accusatory man who says, ‘Perhaps you deny the assistance of God?’ has been refuted and destroyed”[[46]](#footnote-46).

4.6. *Quaestio 5: Has there been someone sinless with God’s assistance?*

This issue has been divided by Orosius into a discussion of two particular questions; hence, I will also preserve this order of discussion.

4.6.1. Quaestio 5,1: Has Scripture actually mentioned someone as sinless?

In the first move, Orosius focuses on the ambiguity introduced by Pelagius and his party. They often claim that Job was sinless, because he is described as without blame – “*sine crimine*” *–* and Zacharias as well, who is described as without reproach – “*sine querella*”*.* In accordance with the rules of *status legalis* of the type *ambiguitas*[[47]](#footnote-47),Orosius presents biblical passages to prove that, in fact, the linguistic *usus* of the Bible does not allow “*sine peccato*”to be treated as being equal with the above two phrases. For instance, Paul in 1 Cor calls the same people “*sine crimine*”but also observes, “*delictum est in uobis*”. Again, according to the rules of *status legalis*, Orosius defines the difference between *crimen* (an act) and *peccatum*, which can be either an act or a thought. Finally, Orosius furnishes other passages on Job and Zacharias to observe that calling someone “*iustum et sine querela*” is always done “within the confines of temporality and according to the judgments of men, not according to that final judgment of God”[[48]](#footnote-48), so he can conclude that “to call anyone ‘without blame’ and ‘without reproach’ is not evidence of perfection, but an example of outward conduct”[[49]](#footnote-49).

In paragraphs 23 and 24, Orosius presents a similar analysis of the terms *immaculatus* and *sine macula*,claiming that so too Peter, Abraham, David and Solomon have sinned. Mentioning David allows Orosius to come back to the label he has given to his enemy in the *narratio* and call Pelagius “Goliath”. In this conclusion of the exegetical argument ending in (?) *Quaestio* 5,1, Orosius also founds a transition to *Quaestio* 5,2, shifting back to the third person:

And now this “Goliath” together with his armorbearer falsely accuses me that the Lord does not do in his particular case what he has never done before in the world! And Ecclesiastes says, “There is nothing new under the sun, nor is anyone able to say, ‘Behold, this is a new thing’. For it has occurred already in the ages which were before us”. And this teacher of new doctrines maintains that what has never happened can happen![[50]](#footnote-50)

After this conclusion, Orosius allows himself to dwell a bit more on the example of two builders of the Jerusalem Temple – David and Solomon – to underline that, at the time of building, they were both without sin, but that David sinned before building it and Solomon did afterwards, so they were not altogether sinless. This last argument is summed up already in paragraph 25, where the discussion concerning *Quaestio* 5,2 begins in full.

4.6.2. Quaestio 5,2: God can do everything but he still does not do some things for other reasons

From the point of view of argumentative strategies, Orosius puts himself in a very sensitive spot. He knows that the main theme of his defence is to constantly remind the reader about the ambiguous nature of the whole case at hand. As always in apology, he is happy to inform the audience every now and then about his next step, and that is what he again does at the outset of the new line of argumentation in paragraph 25,3. He promises to come back now to the beginning of his proposition (“*ad exordium propositionis sermo reuocandus*”) and to talk about the main theme of the whole case (“*ad celsitudinem capitis recurrendum*”)[[51]](#footnote-51). Orosius plays on words here, as *caput* – the heading, the main theme, means also a “head”, and Christ, as it happens, is called the head of the Church. In this line of argument, Orosius uses develops a (?) *narratio* on the economy of salvation, starting with the story of creation, through the prevarication of Adam and Eve and original sin that (, and ?) jumps later to the story of the salvific coming of Jesus Christ, who is the sole Mediator and who is going to be our merciful judge at the end of times. Exegetical argumentation prevails here, too – mostly in the characteristic comparative mode, where Pelagius is portrayed as contradictor of Scripture or of certain of its authors:

Peter says, “for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”; and Paul testifies, “which he offered in him to the dispensation of the fullness of time, to renew all things in Christ”. And now a certain someone emerges like a frog from out of the mud and loudly croaks, “Why should I wait for the proper time? Why should I wait for the Judgment? If God is able, he is always able; if he is always able, then he does not have unjust regard of people”[[52]](#footnote-52).

Many elements of the argumentation discussed in previous sections surface here too: the insulting labelling in the pattern of an invective, *sermocinatio*, in which Orosius puts into the mouth of Pelagius the most absurd claims vaguely connected to his teachings, making it an exemplary slippery slope argument.

In this whole line of argument, Orosius is careful to show that there was no one sinless in Scripture except Jesus Christ. God has made this one exception to the rule, because it was a part of his salvific plan. The order of this plan is such that no human being with a nature vitiated by original sin can be sinless: everyone needs the assistance of Jesus as the Mediator, his mercy and grace. Here, Orosius finally clarifies his logically difficult position on the understanding of the ambiguous term: “*sine peccato esse posse*”. The main justification of his reasoning can be traced in paragraphs 28,7–8: “[H]e who created time restrains his powers, and the principle of his plan for the world allows him to mix patience with power” and “there is nothing God cannot do, nor is there anything that God does not do, unless perhaps that which he does not wish to do, or that which it is not proper to do, or that which he does not propose to do”[[53]](#footnote-53). All this means that God is technically always able to do everything; he is, in particular, able to allow people to be sinless, though his plan does not have a place for sinless men except for one Mediator. In accordance with this plan, the possibility of a sinless man has never transpired, and that is why everyone will meet the judge at the proper time. At the end of this line of exegetical argumentation, Orosius once again shifts to the second person to ridicule Pelagius for allegedly not believing in God’s judgment for himself. In doing so, he once again employs the conditional clauses typical of the apologetical genre:

If you realize that those were caught in the midst of oppressing the wretched man and then condemned to final judgment, then accept the fact that even you yourself have to be cleansed by that imperturbable cleansing. If, however, as one reads, God’s sufferance grants people free will up to this very day, believe that also you must be tested up to this very day[[54]](#footnote-54)!

4.7. *Quaestio 6: Do we claim that God has created an evil human nature?*

In *Epistula ad Demetriadem*, Orosius found a charge “vomited”, as he claims, by Pelagius against the Catholics, who supposedly think that God created man with an evil nature. Orosius dedicates chapter 29 to refute this charge. The tactic he uses is already well known from previous sections, and hence it will be described only briefly. Orosius announces the way he will proceed, uses *sermocinationes*, invectives, comparisons, rhetorical questions, exclamations, conditional clauses and exegetical arguments. He absolutely rejects the charge, and calls anyone who thinks that human nature is evil not deserving of the final judgement or resurrection. In comparison to other parts, this section is the most laden with invectives. Pelagius is presented as an uneducated newcomer from a faraway province breaking the rules of *decorum* by writing in an improper fashion to an aristocratic virgin and as a blind, vicious, and ignorant man. The main line of reasoning employs a chain of biblical quotations to prove that God did not make human nature evil, but that after and because of the prevarication in Paradise this nature became weak. Pelagius, of course, is presented as the one who denies all these passages from Scripture.

4.8. *Quaestio 7: Can people bear the burden of the law?*

In the last part of the *Liber apologeticus*, Orosius defends his party against the charge found in *Epistula ad Demetriadem* 16: “You are blaming the Catholic Church, of which we are the heart, because it appears as if it is saying in despair that God, the author of man, has imposed on man something which he cannot bear”[[55]](#footnote-55). Here too, Orosius uses the same repertoire of arguments as before. He rejects the charge by claiming that the Church has always believed that the only way to bear the burden of the law is through cooperation with the assistance of grace. Without it, neither the prophets nor the apostles were able to bear the burden of the law by themselves. That is why we hear so many of them lament their weakness and cry for God’s help – only Pelagius is different and feels capable of overcoming all obstacles on his own. Once again, Orosius uses biblical quotations to show that Pelagius contradicts them. Once again, he uses invective to ridicule Pelagius for being much stronger and more obese than the saints from Scripture and suggests that this might be his recipe for self-confidence: “But perhaps you have some special self-confidence for the carrying of that burden because you have been nurtured on baths and sumptuous feasts. You have broad shoulders and a strong neck, even now displaying your portliness before you”[[56]](#footnote-56). We can see the full display of insulting and ironical labels, this time next to each other: “You perfect man without any weakness! You who are capable of enduring the entire burden of the law! I say, you conceit-filled but empty man!”[[57]](#footnote-57) Once again, we come across exclamations, rhetorical questions, conditional clauses, comparisons, etc. Orosius argues that Scripture proves that, although, technically, everything is possible, it is less important to follow this line of possibility than to undertake the factual analysis of the history of salvation in which there has not been a single case of a human person being able to bear the burden of law throughout an entire life apart from Christ.

**5. Summary**

Analysis of the argumentation of Paulus Orosius’s *Liber apologeticus* has allowed us to make some original observations about this text. Firstly, the work retains the form typical of classical *apologia* as described by Sharon Downey. That is, like the standard *apologia*, the piece shows tendencies 1. to use conditional sentences, 2. to introduce new lines of argument by means of the interrogative form, 3. to make frequent use of an argument based on comparison, 4. to focus on counterattack and invective against the accuser, 5. to make direct references to the audience of the work or the audience, 6. to reveal explicitly one’s strategy of defence.

Secondly, the work preserves the classical speech structure, that is, from the *exordium* it proceeds to the *narratio*, followed by the *diuisio*. The essential part is the *argumentatio*, in which, as in, for example, the *Apology of Socrates*, the lines of argumentation of the defence are intermingled with the accusation. The end is crowned by a very short *peroratio*.

Thirdly, Orosius employs an argumentation well known to us from rhetorical textbooks such as Cicero’s *De inuentione*, both at the level of the most general argumentative structure of the work as a whole and the detailed solutions in specific lines of argumentation. The main justification for writing the work is to defend himself against the accusation of preaching heresy – specifically the claim that, even with God’s help, man cannot be without sin. Orosius refutes this charge briefly according to the *status coniecturae*, using the relevant arguments suggested by Cicero, and then again, according to a particular type of this status called *anticategoria*, moves on to accuse Pelagius of heresy. The immediate pretext for the accusation is the claim, expressed several times, concerning the ambiguity of the charge against him and the recognition that the reason he was accused at all is that Pelagius is attempting to avoid being accused himself of evident heresy. In the course of the analysis, an argumentative structure became apparent that centres around seven *quaestiones*. Within each of these, the argumentation is built on the types of arguments known in classical rhetorical theory as *iudicatum* and *comparabile*. Orosius seeks first of all to demonstrate that Pelagius’s theses, or rather the theses he most often ascribes to Pelagius on the basis of a slippery slope fallacy, are contrary to the message of Scripture. Secondly, he seeks to demonstrate that the conduct he attributes to Pelagius contradicts the behaviour of the prophets, the apostles, and Jesus himself. To this end, he makes use of a constant and repetitive repertoire of means of affecting the emotions, chief among which are extremely frequent invectives, usually in the form of insulting or ironic labels, *sermocinationes*, *exclamationes*, and rhetorical questions. This ensures the formal coherence of the work and accounts for its confrontational character, which is closer to the anti-Pelagian writings of Jerome[[58]](#footnote-58) than to those of Augustine.

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   Augustinus, *Epistula* 169,13. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As we learn from Augustine’s *Sermo* 348A,6, Orosius brought with him Augustine’s letter to Pelagius, several works of Augustine that had to do with what Augustine perceived as Pelagian teaching and the document condemning Caelestius issued by a council of Carthage in 411. See. J. Vilella, *Biografía crítica de Orosio*, in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 43 (2000), 103-106. This might suggest that his mission was from the beginning connected to the Pelagian controversy. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I would like to thank Andrew Chronister for this suggestion. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A.-G. Hamman, *Orosius de Braga et le Pélagianisme*, in A. Hamman (ed.), *Études patristiques: méthodologie-liturgie, histoire-théologie*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1991, p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hieronymus, *Apologia aduersus libros Rufini* 1,16 (CCL 79, 14): “*lege ad Herennium Tullii libros, lege rhetoricos eius; aut, quia illa sibi dicit inchoata et rudia excidisse de manibus, reuolue tria uolumina de oratore in quibus introducit eloquentissimos illius temporis oratores, Crassum et Antonium, disputantes, et quartum oratorem quem iam senex scribit ad Brutum. tunc intelleges aliter conponi historiam, aliter orationes, aliter dialogos, aliter epistulas, aliter commentarios*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. M. Edwards, M. Goodman, S. Price, and C. Rowland, *Introduction*, in M. Edwards, M. Goodman, S. Price, and C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman World*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *On the Style of Demosthenes*, in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Critical Essays vol. I* , S. Usher (trans.), New York, Harvard University Press, 1989, LCL 465, pp. 326-327. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. R.S. Reid, *“Neither Oratory nor Dialogue”: Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Genre of Plato’s Apology*, in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 27,4 (1997) p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. S.D. Downey, *The Evolution of the Rhetorical Genre of Apologia*, in *Western Journal of Communication (includes Communication Reports)* 57,1 (1993) p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. J. Ulrich, A. Jacobsen, M. Kahlos, *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics*, Berlin, Peter Lang Verlag, 2009, p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Downey, *The Evolution of the Rhetorical Genre of Apologia*, pp. 47-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. A. Antonaci, *Paolo Orosio apologeta*,Galatina, Pajano, 1958, p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Orosius, *Liber apologeticus*, K. Zangemeister (ed.), Wien, 1882, CSEL 5, p. 603. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. M.Z. Kensky, *Getting Perspective: The Divine Courtroom in Tertullian of Carthage’s Apologeticum*, in A. Mermelstein, S. Holtz (eds.), *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, p. 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. C.L. Hanson, *Iberian Fathers*, vol. 3: *Pacian of Barcelona and Orosius of Braga*, Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 1999, FC 99, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. In the time of Augustine, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* was probably just being brought back to life, but the most popular handbook was still Cicero’s *De inuentione.* See J.O. Ward, *Classical Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: The Medieval Rhetors and their Art 400–1300*, Leiden, Brill, 2019, pp. 120-123; J.O. Ward, *The Medieval and Early Renaissance Study of Cicero’s* De inuentione *and the* Rhetorica ad Herennium*: Commentaries and Contexts*, in V. Cox, J.O. Ward (eds.), *The Rhetoric of Cicero in Its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, Leiden, Brill, 2006, 3-69; R.P. Taylor, *Pre-history in the ninth-century manuscripts of the* Ad Herennium, in *Classica et Mediaeualia* 44 (1993) 243-254; and R. Toczko, A. Ployd, *Introduction*, in R. Tockzo, A. Ployd (eds.), *Augustine and Rhetoric: Argumentative Strategies in Early Christianity*, Leiden, Brill, 2023, 1-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. As is typical for apology, Orosius mixes *probatio*/*confirmatio* with *refutatio*/*reprehensio*. The clearest signal move from one to another is visible in *quaestiones* 6 and 7, where he explicitly writes of this arrangement of his argument. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. We can see that Orosius’s use of *partitio* follows mostly the precepts of Cicero from *De inuentione* 1,31 (LCL 386, 62): “*Recte habita in causa partitio inlustrem et perspicuam totam efficit orationem. Partes eius sunt duae, quarum utraque magno opere ad aperiendam causam et constituendam pertinet controuersiam. Vna pars est, quae, quid cum aduersariis conueniat et quid in controuersia relinquatur, ostendit; ex qua certum quiddam destinatur auditori, in quo animum debeat habere occupatum. Altera est, in qua rerum earum, de quibus erimus dicturi, breuiter expositio ponitur distributa; ex qua conficitur, ut certas animo res teneat auditor, quibus dictis intellegat fore peroratum*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Liber apologeticus* 9,1 (CSEL 5, 614; FC 99, 125): “*nunc, quoniam ab hoc qualicumque uerbo esse me liberum reor, liberum fide uestra, liberum conscientia mea, ipsius uerbi ambiguitate discussa conabor exquirere, hi qui ita nos respondisse adserunt, qualiter ipsi interrogasse uideantur. forsitan per modum interrogationis ipsorum arcanum dogmatis denudabitur, ut reciprocis feriendo uulneribus emissorem suum remissa certius tela castigent*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *Liber apologeticus* 8,4 (CSEL 5, 613; FC 99, 124): “*testem inuoco Deum super animam meam, beatissimi sacerdotes, scientibus haec eadem uobis me cum que testantibus, nullam me in illo conuentu uestro ore meo protulisse blasphemiam neque huiuscemodi uerba quae mihi ab episcopo Iohanne sunt obiecta dixisse, hoc est, etiam cum adiutorio Dei non posse esse hominem sine peccato*”. Compare *Liber apologeticus* 7,3 (CSEL 5, 611; FC 99, 122): “The bishop replied, ‘I myself heard you say that not even with God’s assistance can a person be without sin’. Now, most reverend fathers, as you are my witnesses, and as it has been witnessed by all of our brothers and those saintly men as well who are standing as my supporters in this testimony out of their love for the truth, I responded immediately, saying that such a declaration as now has been asserted by the bishop to have been made by me, never in the past came out of my mouth” (“*episcopus respondit: ‘ego te audiui dixisse, quia nec cum Dei adiutorio possit esse homo sine peccato’. Ego quidem, beatissimi sacerdotes, sicut et uos testes estis et uniuersa fraternitas et praeterea sancti uiri qui huic testimonio amore ueritatis adsistunt, statim testificatus sum dicens, quia eiusmodi uerbum, quod nunc a me dictum episcopus intenderit, numquam de ore meo antea processisset*”). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *Liber apologeticus* 28,10–11 (CSEL 5, 650; FC 99, 156): “*et tu uis iam […], ut tibi homines in hoc praesenti tempore, quod nusquam antea dictum in sacris uoluminibus inuenitur, quemquam sine peccato esse respondeant et, si in hoc forte consenserint, de die momentoque subscribant, nouam calumniae machinam instruens, ut, quod non fieri dicimus, non posse fieri dixisse uideamur*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. H. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, Leiden, Brill, 1998, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Cicero, *De inuentione* 1,48 (LCL 386, 88): “*Iudicatum est res assensione aut auctoritate aut iudicio alicuius aut aliquorum comprobata. Id tribus in generibus spectatur, religioso, communi, approbato. Religiosum est quod iurati legibus iudicarunt. Commune est quod homines uulgo probarunt et secuti sunt, huiusmodi: ut maioribus natu assurgatur, ut supplicum misereatur. Approbatum est quod homines, cum dubium esset quale haberi oporteret, sua constituerunt auctoritate*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Cicero, *De inuentione* 1,49 (LCL 386, 88–90): “*Comparabile autem est quod in rebus diuersis similem aliquam rationem continet. Eius partes sunt tres: imago, collatio, exemplum. Imago est oratio demonstrans corporum aut naturarum similitudinem. Collatio est oratio rem cum re ex similitudine conferens. Exemplum est quod rem auctoritate aut casu alicuius hominis aut negotii confirmat aut infirmat*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Cicero, *De inuentione* 1,48 (LCL 386, 88): “*Credibile est, quod sine ullo teste auditoris opinione firmatur, hoc modo: ‘Nemo est, qui non liberos suos incolumes et beatos esse cupiat’*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, p. 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Cicero, *De inuentione* 2,16 (LCL 386, 180): “*Nunc exponemus locos, quorum pars aliqua in omnem coniecturalem incidit controuersiam. Hoc autem et in horum locorum expositione et in ceterorum oportebit attendere, non omnes in omnem causam conuenire. Nam ut omne nomen ex aliquibus, non ex omnibus litteris scribitur, sic omnem in causam non omnis argumentorum copia, sed eorum necessario pars aliqua conueniet. Omnis igitur ex causa, ex persona, ex facto ipso coniectura capienda est*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Cicero, *De inuentione* 2,18-19 (LCL 386, 180-182): “*Ratiocinatio est autem diligens et considerata faciendi aliquid aut non faciendi excogitatio. Ea dictur interfuisse tum, cum aliquid [faciendi aut non faciendi] certa de causa uitasse aut secutus esse animus uidebitur: si amicitiae quid causa factum dicetur, si inimici ulciscendi, si metus, si gloriae, si pecuniae, si denique, ut omnia generatim amplectamur, alicuius retinendi, augendi adipiscendiue commodi aut contra reiciundi, deminuendi deuitandiue incommodi causa. Nam in horum genus alterutrum illa quoque incident, in quibus aut incommodi aliquid maioris adipiscendi commodi causa aut maiores uitandi incommodi suscipitur aut aliquod commodum maioris adipiscendi commodi aut maioris uitandi incommodi praeteritur. Hic locus sicut aliquod fundamentum est huius constitutionis*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *Liber apologeticus* 10,1 (CSEL 5, 616; FC 99, 127): “*Itaque uniuersos homines arbitror, uel qui excellenti fide et sapientia praediti sunt uel qui se aliter habent, hoc, quod Deus omnia potest, uenerari credere confiteri*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *Liber apologeticus* 9,2 (CSEL 5, 615; FC 99, 125): “*hunc non tantum sententia mea dixerim blasphemum anathema detestandum, sed etiam uel in exemplum Nadab et Abiu diuino igne damnandum*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. *Liber apologeticus* 7,4 (CSEL 5, 616; FC 99, 123): “*quomodo Latinum expers Latinitatis Graecus audiuit?*”. John of Jerusalem might have easily disarmed this argument by claiming that Orosius should have used Greek or brought his own interpreters. Orosius seems to be overstepping the mark, here. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. *Liber apologeticus* 8,2 (CSEL 5, 613; FC 99, 124): “*quippe cum mirari iam nemo debeat conqu<i>ri et existere falsos testes in Hierusalem a sacerdotibus atque senioribus*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. *Liber apologeticus* 10,2 (CSEL 5, 616-617; FC 99, 127): “*potest ergo omnia in homine, qui utique potest omnia. Porro autem quid superbit terra et cinis, ut dicat ‘homo potest’, cum Deus possit?*” [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. *Liber apologeticus* 11,4 (CSEL 5, 618; FC 99, 128): “*quodsi apud uos non negasse dixisse est et tacuisse clamasse est, frustra Dauid postulat: pone, Domine, custodiam ori meo et ostium circumstantiae labiis meis: frustra et ego me non dixisse, in quo arguor, testibus et testificatione confirmo, si alter audire potuit, quod meus sermo non dixit*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. *Liber apologeticus* 11,5 (CSEL 5, 618; FC 99, 128-129): “*sed concedo, ut quod nequaquam dixeris pro dicto accipiendum putes*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. This line of argument is masterfully employed later by Augustine in *De gestis Pelagii* – analysed lately by A. Chronister, *Augustine,* Inuentio*, and* De gestis Pelagii, in *Augustine and Rhetoric: Argumentative Strategies in Early Christianity*, 15-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. *Liber apologeticus* 12,2 (CSEL 5, 620; FC 99, 130): “*dicis, posse in hoc saeculo esse hominem sine peccato cum Dei adiutorio. Tu dicis ‘potest homo’, ego dico ‘potest Deus’*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. *Liber apologeticus* 12,3-4 (CSEL 5, 620-621; FC 99, 130): “*Dominus Christus summo praemio fidei dignum iudicat, si quis haec filium Dei posse crediderit; et Britannicus noster mox, ut uoluerit, se posse confidit! Fideli paralytico Dominus dicit: constans esto, fili: dimissa sunt tibi peccata tua; et nunc nouus magister ministerque mensarum remissionem peccatorum de sua magis ausus est possibilitate praesumere, nec de Domino expectat audire! Scribae non intellegentes ueritatem murmurant et dicunt: quis potest dimittere peccata nisi solus Deus?; et hic abolita esse iudicat, quae Deum nesciat dimisisse!*” [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. I have argued elsewhere that “this expression can suggest that Pelagius had a custom of both giving and attending parties, something already wrong for a promotor of ascetic life. Yet, it can also paint a more damaging image, if we read it as a hint to Pelagius’s behaviour during symposia, where he could act both as a master and as a servant” (R. Toczko, *The Tradition of Roman invective and the Portrayal of Pelagius*, in A. Dupont, R. Villegas Marín, G. Malavasi, M.C. Chiriatti (eds.),*“Sancti uiri, ut audio”. Theologies, Rhetorics and Receptions of the Pelagian Controversy Reappraised*, Leuven, Peeters, 2023, p. 140). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. *Liber apologeticus* 16,3 (CSEL 5, 625; FC 99, 135): “*agnus Dei, filius Dei, ut accipiat librum de manu Patris, praefert stigmata passionis, non iudicans perpetratam nisi in morte atque in resurrectione uictoriam; et ἀναμάρτητος meus uenire sibi posse perfectionem uitae inmaculatae manducanti bibenti dormientique confirmat!*” [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. *Liber apologeticus* 16,9-10 (CSEL 5, 627; FC 99, 136): “*spiritu timoris Dei cohonestatum, quo post multam crapulam nouissime expergefactus adiungit, posse hominem sine peccato esse non sine adiutorio Dei, et per hos praesumptionum, ut arbitror, gradus non reformidat ascendere usque in id elatus, ut dicat, quia in similitudinem Christi perfecta sui potentia plenus in toto super eum descenderit Spiritus Sanctus et manserit*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. *Liber apologeticus* 17,2-3 (CSEL 5, 628; FC 99, 137): “*dicis hominem posse esse sine peccato; iterum ac saepius repeto. Homo, qui hoc potest, Christus est: aut praesume nomen aut depone fiduciam*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. *Liber apologeticus* 18,8 (CSEL 5, 632; FC 99, 140-141): “*Paulus apostolus dixit etiam se staturum ante tribunal Dei et propria corporis prout gessit cum ceteris redditurum; contra autem Pelagius confidenter audet dicere: ‘ita consummo uniuersam in carne perfectionem, ut de iudicis bonitate nihil sperem’*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. *Liber apologeticus* 19,1 (CSEL 5, 633; FC 99, 141): “*an tu fortassis Dei adiutorium negas?*” [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. *Liber apologeticus* 19,2 (CSEL 5, 633; FC 99, 141): “*concedo paulisper calumniae tuae, ut, dum quod in te conuincere uolo in me uidear detegere, inueniamur simul et ego in mei defensione purgatior et tu in tua confusione manifestior*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *Liber apologeticus* 21,4 (CSEL 5, 637; FC 99, 144): “*Confusa euacuataque calumnia est caeci arguentis, qui ait: ‘forte tu Dei adiutorium negas?’*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. See Cicero, *De inuentione* 2,116 (LCL 386, 284): “*Ex ambiguo autem nascitur controuersia cum quid senserit scriptor obscurum est, quod scriptum duas pluresue res significat*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *Liber apologeticus* 21,10 (CSEL 5, 638; FC 99, 146): “*quamobrem obsequenter accipitur, quotiescumque Scriptura commemorat et iustum et sine querella, pro captu temporis et secundum iudicia hominum dici, non secundum illud ultimum iudicium Dei, cui uniuersorum conscientia subicitur et lingua omnium confiteatur*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. *Liber apologeticus* 22,6 (CSEL 5, 640; FC 99, 147): “*ita sine crimine dici quemquam et sine querella non est perfectionis testimonium sed conuersationis exemplum*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. *Liber apologeticus* 24,3-4 (CSEL 5, 642; FC 99, 149): “*Dauid usque ad mortem non emundatur, sed praelato in templi structione sibi filio se ipse condemnat; et Goliath cum armigero suo calumniatur mihi, cur Dominus non faciat in eo, quod numquam fecit in saeculo! Dicit et Ecclesiastes: nihil sub sole nouum, nec ualet quisquam dicere: ecce hoc recens est; iam enim praecessit in saeculis quae fuerunt ante nos; et nouorum dogmatum instructor adfirmat: potest fieri, quod numquam factum est!*” [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. *Liber apologeticus* 25,3 (CSEL 5, 644; I do not use the translation of Hanson here, as it is flawed): “*nunc demum mihi ueluti ad exordium propositionis sermo reuocandus est et paulisper iniuriae dolore seposito cum reuerentia disputandi ad celsitudinem capitis recurrendum*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. *Liber apologeticus* 28,1-2 (CSEL 5, 648-649; FC 99, 154): “*dicit Petrus in salutem paratam reuelari in tempore nouissimo; testatur et Paulus, quod proposuit in eo in dispensationem plenitudinis temporum instaurare omnia in Christo; et nunc nobis nescio quis quasi rana e caeno emergit et personat: quid mihi est expectare tempus, expectare iudicium. Deus si potest, semper potest: si semper potest, personarum acceptor non est!*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. *Liber apologeticus* 28,7-8 (CSEL 5, 650; FC 99, 155): “*operator temporis temperat uirtutes et ratio dispositionis miscet potentiae patientiam[…] et tamen Deus nihil non potest, nec est quicquam quod non faciat nisi forte quod nolit, non oporteat, non proponat*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. *Liber apologeticus* 28,13 (CSEL 5, 651; FC 99, 157): “*si illos in oppressione miseri hominis conprehensos ultimo tunc iudicio intellegis esse damnatos: accipe et te ipsum hic inperturbabili emundatione purgandum; sin autem, ut legitur, patientia Dei adhuc illis liberum indulget arbitrium: adhuc et te crede temptandum*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. *Liber apologeticus* 30,3 (CSEL 5, 655; FC 99, 160): “*exprobras Ecclesiae catholicae, cuius nos uiscera sumus, quod quasi dicere desperando uideatur, quod Deus auctor hominis inposuerit homini quod ferre non possit*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. *Liber apologeticus* 31,2 (CSEL 5, 657; FC 99, 161-162): “*sed tibi specialis inde portandi oneris fortasse fiducia est, quod balneis epulis que nutritus latos humeros gestas robustam que ceruicem, praeferens etiam in fronte pinguedinem, sicut scriptum est: tetendit enim aduersum Deum manum suam et contra omnipotentem roboratus est*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. *Liber apologeticus* 31,8 (CSEL 5, 659; FC 99, 163): “*tu perfectus sine infirmitate, tu omnem legis sarcinam ferre possibilis, tu, inquam, homo inflate sed uacue*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. The dependence of Orosius’s argumentation on Jerome was proved in a clear fashion by G. Malavasi, *Orosio discepolo di Agostino? L’influenza di Girolamo nel Liber Apologeticus*, in *Augustinianum* 55 (2015) 113-136. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)