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***ELOCUTIO* IN QUINTILIAN'S
INSTITUTIO ORATORIA, BOOK EIGHT***

SUMMARY: The rhetorical art is the skill of speaking well, it is useful, it is an art, and it has *virtus*. The Greek concept of φρόσις is rendered by Roman authors as *elocutio*, i.e. style. Quintilian believes clarity of speech is the basic element of good style. Words should be apt, order – direct, conclusion – not too distant, and everything should have adequate proportions. Words should be selected depending on the context. The words used in a metaphorical sense gain appreciation only in a specific context. Ability to present facts clearly and vividly is a great asset. Even the natural and unsophisticated simplicity, which the Greeks call ἀφέλεια, contains some decorativeness, while punctilious scrupulosity in adhering to grammatical correctness gives the impression of sophistication and subtlety. The real power of the speaker lies in his ability to strengthen or weaken the power of words. The last, sixth chapter of book eight contains Quintilian's thoughts on the rhetorical tropes. A trope (τρόπος) is an artistic (*cum virtute*) change of a word or an expression from the original and proper one to another.

KEYWORDS: *elocutio*, deterioration of speech, clarity of speech, rhetorical ornaments, neologisms, erroneous use of language, *sententia*, tropes

Praefatio to the book eight contains a summary of all the questions discussed in the preceding books. Quintilian reminds the reader that

the first five books were devoted to the method of finding and appropriate arranging of the subject matter. On the one hand it is necessary for studying the method in great detail if we want to achieve the highest level of the oratory art, on the other hand a shorter and simpler method of education is more appropriate for the beginners. An experienced teacher should choose what is best in various authors and pass to his students these rules which he agrees with, instead of wasting time on refuting other rules. The students, after they gain the force of speech, will become better educated. Allowing them to think there is no other way they could follow is permissible; the experience gained with time will slowly let them to discover what is best. The authors of rhetorical theory works, due to their perseverance in defending their opinions, made the rules they preach clear and easy to master. When we take the rhetorical art as a whole, it is more difficult to decide what should be taught than to teach after we have made the decision.

Here the author of *Institutio oratoria* once again reminds us that the rhetorical art is the skill of speaking well, that it is useful, that it is an art, and that it has *virtus*.¹ Its subject matter is all possible things that

¹ Cf. Quint., II 15, 33-34, 38: *rhetoricen autem quidam eandem civilitatem esse iudicaverunt; Cicero scientiae civilis partem vocat (civilis autem scientia idem quod sapientia est); quidam eandem philosophiam, quorum esse Isocrates. huic eius substantiae <Cleanthis> maxime conveniet finitio rhetoricen esse bene dicendi scientiam. nam et orationis omnes virtutes semel complectitur et protinus etiam mores oratoris, cum bene dicere non possit nisi bonus. idem valet Chrysippi finis ille ductus a Cleanthe, scientia recte dicendi [...] manifestum est illud quoque, quem finem vel quid summum et ultimum habeat rhetorice, quod τέλος dicitur; ad quod omnis ars tendit: nam si est ipsa bene dicendi scientia, finis eius et summum est bene dicere [Some however identify rhetoric with politics, Cicero calls it a department of the science of politics (and science of politics and philosophy are identical terms), while others again call it a branch of philosophy, among them Isocrates. The definition which best suits its real character is that which makes rhetoric the science of speaking well. For this definition includes all the virtues of oratory and the character of the orator as well, since no man can speak well who is not good himself. The definition given by Chrysippus, who derived it from Cleanthes, to the effect that it is the science of speaking rightly, amounts to the same thing [...] we are now in a position to see clearly what is the end, the highest aim, the ultimate goal of rhetoric, that τέλος in fact which every art must possess. For if rhetoric is the science of speaking well, its end and highest aim is to speak well (trans. H. E. Butler)]. I use the text edition of Radermacher 1959-1971.*

need to be discussed; they fall under three categories: epideictic, advisory, and judiciary. Moreover, every speech is built of a subject matter and words. *Inventio* is to be observed in the subject matter, *elocutio* in the words, while *collocatio*, the order of words, in both; *memoria* joins the subject matter with words, while *actio* makes it attractive. The speaker has a duty: *docere, movere, delectare*. *Expositio* and *argumentatio* belong to *docere*, while the affects, which can be used in all parts of the speech, but are most advantageously placed in *elocutio*, belong to *movere*. Questions are either indefinite or definite and they pertain to people, time, or place. All types of subject matter invoke three fundamental questions: *an sit, quid sit, quale sit*. Advisory speeches contain another element which depends on the conjecture, because we must ascertain whether the subject of deliberation is possible or impossible. When it comes to the judiciary speeches, some are based on single and some on complex questions; in some the basis is offense (*intentio*), in other – defence (*depulsio*). Questions under discussion relate either to something written (*ex scripto*) or something done (*ex facto*). In case of *scriptum* we have to take under consideration *vis verborum* or *voluntas*, in relation to which we usually investigate the nature of all causes, be they criminal or civil, and which fall under the following labels: writing, intention, syllogism, ambiguity, contradictory laws. All judiciary causes consist of five parts: in *exordium* the speaker needs to win the goodwill of the audience, in *narratio* instruct them, in *probatio* confirm the presentation of facts, in *refutatio* refute the adversary's arguments, in *peroratio* either refresh the memory of the audience or play upon their emotions. There are many subjects that can be discussed using only natural, instinctive knowledge, with no recourse to formal teaching (*doctrina*), and many questions have not been invented by masters of rhetorical art, but only observed by them during their practice in the courts of law. The speakers generally agree that the theory of style (*elocutionis ratio*) causes the greatest difficulties. Marcus Antonius believed that there were many eloquent speakers but none of them spoke in an artistic way (*eloquens*). *Ornate dicere* is characteristic for truly most eloquent speaker (*eloquentissimus*).² Cicero claimed that *inventio*

² Cf. Cic., *De or.*, I 21, 94; Chico-Rico 2003: 201-211.

and *dispositio* are within reach of every sensible man, while true eloquence can be attained only by an educated professional speaker, and thus the speaker should pay to it the greatest care.³ This can be deduced from the definition of the verb *eloqui*. The verb means to show and to convey to the audience every single thing the speaker imagined in their mind. This activity is focused on by all the teachers of rhetorical art, and it cannot be successfully attempted without following the rules of the art: this is the main subject of our studies, the aim of our exercises and efforts at imitation, the goal to which we devoted the energy of our whole life; it is eloquence which allows one speaker to better all his rivals, and which makes one style of speech better than another. The mistake made by the representatives of the Asiatic school and all other decadent schools was not based on their inability to perceive or arrange the subject matter, and, on the other hand, the people who are called dry (*aridi*) were neither foolish nor incapable of understanding the cases in which they were engaged. The former, though, lacked good taste and temperance in speech, while the latter lacked strength; and it is a fact well known that on these qualities are founded the true faults and virtues of the rhetorical art.

However, this does not mean that we should devote ourselves wholeheartedly to studying the vocabulary alone. Some orators devote themselves to such futile studies in order to achieve elegance (*decus*), but it becomes the most beautiful of all rhetorical virtues only when it is natural and unaffected. The speaker should be diligent in his choice of words, but of particular importance is his focus on the subject matter. As a rule, the best words are these which create a harmonious whole with the subject matter and thus can be recognized by their inner brilliance. In our times, writes Quintilian, we search for those words as if they were hidden from us and forever elusive.

Usually, the effect of excessive stylistic diligence is deterioration of speech. The reason for this is mainly that the best words are the least exalted and these which give the impression of simplicity and sincerity. For those which are too carefully selected and thus uncover the inner workings of the rhetorical art fail to be well-received by the audience,

³ Cf. Cic., *Or.*, XIV 44.

who lose their trust in such words because the sense becomes obscured. Due to our love of words we paraphrase things which can be said in a simple language, we repeat things we have once said, we collect multiple words where one should be enough, we believe that it is better to be allusive than to say things in a straightforward manner. We borrow figures and metaphors from the worst poets, and we think the mark of a true genius is the fact that we need a genius to understand the meaning of our words. Cicero⁴ openly taught that the greatest fault is to abstain from common and widely used mode of speech. Quintilian notes that in his times Cicero is regarded as a dry (*durus*) and uncouth author. We though, he adds ironically, are much better because we do not give much credit to things dictated by nature and we do not search for rhetorical ornaments, but for extravagant cosmetics (*lenocinium*), while the true virtue of words lies in the power of connecting the facts logically. We can see that the majority of contemporary speakers waste time on discovering single words and judging their worth. If such practice was intended for using the best words, then one should abandon that unfortunate diligence which inhibits the natural flow of speech and smothers the flame of imagination with delay and lack of trust. The speaker would have the necessary words ready at hand and in front of his eyes. In order to reach this goal prior studies are necessary, and the requisite competence should be not only acquired, but also continuously improved. Careful search for words, their critical evaluation and comparison is necessary when we give a lesson, not when we speak. If our words obey the rules of Latin language, have meaning, are adorned

⁴ Cf. Cic., *De or.*, I 3, 12: *ceterarum artium studia fere reconditis atque abditis e fontibus hauriuntur; dicendi autem omnis ratio in medio posita communi quodam in usu atque in hominum ore et sermone versatur; ut in ceteris id maxime excellat, quod longissime sit ab imperitorum intellegentia sensuque disiunctum, in dicendo autem vitium vel maximum sit a vulgari genere orationis atque a consuetudine communis sensus abhorrere* [the subjects of the other arts are derived as a rule from hidden and remote sources, while the whole art of oratory lies open to the view, and is concerned in some measure with the common practice, custom, and speech of mankind, so that, whereas in all other arts that is most excellent which is farthest removed from the understanding and mental capacity of the untrained, in oratory the very cardinal sin is to depart from the language of everyday life, and the usage approved by the sense of the community (trans. E. W. Sutton)].

with figures of speech, and placed in appropriate manner, then we have achieved the success we strived for. While the style demands the greatest possible care, we should remember that nothing should be done with solely words in mind, as words were invented for a single purpose: to express things. Among words the most commendable are these which betray our thoughts and affect the judges in the way we intend. Such words will undoubtedly guarantee the success of our speech: it will be praiseworthy and graceful not due to indecorous charm, but due to fame and respect.

Quintilian begins the first chapter stating that the Greek concept of *φράσις* is rendered by Roman authors as *elocutio*, i.e. style.⁵ It is shown either in single or grouped words. The former should be Latin, easy to comprehend, decorative, well suited to the intended purpose. The latter should be without error, well placed, decorated with rhetorical figures. Our words, as Quintilian emphasizes, should contain neither foreign nor provincial elements. For there are numerous authors well-versed in *ratio loquendi*, whose language is more intricate than idiomatic. Quintilian gives the example of Theophrastus, whose language was too Attic for the Athenians, and of Livy who, despite his extraordinary eloquence, was accused by Asinius Pollio of using provincial idioms (*Patavinitas*). This is why all words and opinions should be perceived as aboriginally Roman, instead of acquired along with Roman citizenship.

Clarity of speech (*perspicuitas*) is a result of aptness in using words, but aptness demands more than one interpretation. First meaning is naming things in an apt way, but we will not always follow this rule. We should devoid our speech of all things obscene, vulgar, and narrow-minded. While trying to avoid this error some authors make a bigger one as they abstain from all words commonly used, even if they are necessary to reach their goal. As an example can serve a man who spoke about “Spanish herbs”, but this expression was comprehensible to none but himself. Cassius Severus, ridiculing his vanity, explained that the term meant “gorse”. Quintilian adds that he sees no reason why a certain famous orator believed that the phrase “fish conserved

⁵ Cf. Glare 1990: 600, s.v. *elocutio*: *The expression of an idea in words or a mode or instance of this*; *Rhet. ad Her.*, I 3; III 19; *Quint.*, V 14, 1; IX 1, 16.

in brine" (*duratos muria pisces*) was more elegant than *duratos sal-samento pisces*. The opposite of aptness (*proprium*) is *improprium*, called by Greeks ἄκρῳον. Quintilian gives the following expressions as examples: *tantum sperare dolorem*,⁶ *mortem ferre*,⁷ *de cruce verba ceciderunt*.⁸ It is possible as well to use an inappropriate word (*abusio*; κατόχρησις). Metaphor (*translatio*), which is the greatest ornament of speech, fits words to things, but without any direct relation. This is why *proprietas* refers not to the name itself, but to the meaning of the term, and why it should be carefully calculated using one's mind, not ears. The term is also used when we describe multiple things using the same word. For instance, the noun *vertex* means not only a whirlpool, but also the top of the head and a mountain peak; *solea* is not only a foot, by also a type of sea fish (sole); *turdus* denotes both a thrush and a type of sea fish (wrasse). The third aspect of *proprietas* relates to the situation when a term with multiple meanings bears a special name valid only in appropriate context, e.g. the correct term for a funeral song is *naenia*, while for a general's tent is *augurale*. On the other hand, a term which is shared by many elements can be used in a particular sense when referring to only one of them, for instance *urbs* can mean Rome, *venales* – recently bought slaves, *Corinthia* – bronze tools. Using such terms though, according to Quintilian, does not call for any special skills. An extraordinary praise should be given to words which convey the maximum of meaning, such as the ones used by Cato: *Caesar was completely sober when he undertook the task of destroying the Republic*,⁹ or by Vergil when he wrote of "a simple song" (*deductum carmen*),¹⁰ and Horace describing "a shrill pipe"¹¹ or "Hannibal raising fear".¹² Among *propria* we should also include well-built metaphors. Moreover, Quintilian classifies emphasis as an ornamental element of style: its role is not to make the subject comprehensible, but more comprehensible.

⁶ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, IV 419.

⁷ Cicero's words from the speech of Dolabella, cf. *Or. frag.*, p. 486 M.

⁸ Meaning of these words is unclear.

⁹ Suet., *Caes.*, 53.

¹⁰ Cf. Verg., *Ecl.*, VI 5.

¹¹ Cf. Hor., *Carm.*, I 12, 1-2.

¹² Cf. Hor., *Carm.*, III 6, 36.

Vagueness (*obscuritas*) is the result of using outdated words. It is similar to the practice of searching for the pontiff's chronicles, the oldest treatises, the works of writers long forgotten. This is accompanied by a conscious research into collecting words which are not understood by contemporary people. *Obscuritas* can occur when we use words which are known better in some specific regions than in others, or which have technical character, for example when we call a wind *Atabulus*,¹³ a ship – *stlataria*,¹⁴ phrase *in malo cosanum*¹⁵ is incomprehensible for us. We should refrain from using such phrases when we speak in front of a judge who knows nothing of their meaning or, if we must use them, they should be explained the same way we explain homonyms, for instance the noun *taurus* can be unclear if we do not specify whether we speak of an animal, a mountain, a constellation, the name of a man or the root of a tree. Even more obscurities can be found in complex and continuous constructions. This is why a sentence should not be so long that we would lose control over it, and the conclusion should not be delayed by rearranging words and excessive use of hyperbaton. The effect is even worse when the word order is chaotic, e.g. as in Vergil's well-known verse:

*saxa vocant Itali, mediis quae in fluctibus, aras.*¹⁶

To be avoided at all costs is ambiguous meaning, as in the phrase discussed earlier,¹⁷ *Chremetem audivi percussisse Demean*, but the speaker should also strive to avoid utterances which have unclear meaning, such as *visum a se hominem librum scribentem*.¹⁸ Some writers introduce a multitude of futile words. They shrink from a common way of speaking and, drawn in by the appearance of beauty, they are prone to garrulity, and unwilling to present bare facts. Livy¹⁹ mentions a teacher

¹³ Apulian name for Scirocco.

¹⁴ A cargo ship. Another variant is *saccaria*, with identical meaning. *Stlataria* is the conjecture made by Haupt.

¹⁵ Another variant *inula Cosana* (Schenkl's conjecture) is equally unclear.

¹⁶ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, I 109: *Amid the sea there are rocks which the Italy dwellers call altars.*

¹⁷ Cf. Quint., VII 9, 10.

¹⁸ *He saw a man writing a book.*

¹⁹ Perhaps in the letter to his son, cf. Quint., II 5, 20.

who told his students to “darken” (σκότισον) everything they were to speak. Others, possessed by desire for brevity, remove from their speech even the words which are needed, not caring at all whether people will understand what they are saying. Some err by using figures in a perverse way. The worst of them all are the phrases which the Greeks call ἀδιανόητα, i.e. expressions which, though their meaning is seemingly intelligible, in fact possess a hidden meaning, as in phrase *cum ductus est caecus secundum viam stare*,²⁰ or when the man who was supposed to have torn his own body with his teeth is described as if he “lain upon his own body” (*supra se cubasse*).²¹ There are some who find particular pleasure in expressions such as those because the fact they can guess the riddle gratifies their self-satisfaction, and they start to believe they have not heard a given phrase but invented it all by themselves. On his part, Quintilian believes clarity of speech is the basic element of good style. Words should be apt, order – direct, conclusion – not too distant, and finally, everything should have adequate proportions. This way our language will become both acceptable to educated people and comprehensible for the ignorant. We should not so much entice the judge to understand our arguments as force him to do so.

The third chapter is devoted to the discussion of rhetorical ornaments, i.e. *ornatus*. Here a speaker can allow himself greater leniency. He gains but a moderate applause if he speaks solely in a clear and correct way. In fact, his speech is rather devoid of errors than rich in good qualities (*virtus*). *Inventio* can be achieved even by the untrained, for *dispositio* an intermediate level of education is enough, but more intricate arts are usually obscured in order to remain an art. Effectively, all these qualities are employed only to serve the interests of the actual judiciary causes. Cicero, in the defensive speech of Cornelius, strived solely to enlighten the judge and speak in a harmonious and idiomatic Latin, so that the Romans would express their admiration not with scattered applause, but with a standing ovation. Naturally, the sublime style (*sublimitas*), magnanimity, elegance, and gravity were the causes of such enthusiasm (*fragor*). According to Quintilian, Cicero was right

²⁰ The sentence is, unfortunately, incomprehensible.

²¹ Perhaps the thing meant here is the similarity to a wild beast devouring its victim.

when he wrote in a letter to Brutus²² that eloquence which does not inspire admiration is not worthy of its name. Aristotle expressed exactly the same opinion.²³ Such an ornament should be “manly” (*virilis*), bold, free of effeminate inconstancy (*levitas*), not painted with an artificial dye, full of energy and expression. When it comes to ornaments, *virtutes* and *vitia* are not far from one another, and even those who fall prey to the vices of speech may give them the semblance of virtues. Quintilian stresses that none of the decadents should accuse him of enmity towards speakers who use graceful style. He does not deny that the virtue of grace exists, he merely states that none of them possess it. The true beauty and utility are always united.²⁴ The ornaments of the speech should be varied. Epideictic speeches have only one purpose, i.e. giving pleasure to the audience, and thus they showcase all the virtues of the rhetorical art and employ all kinds of ornaments. When a situation calls for the speaker to rise to the task he has undertaken, he should not think of his own fame. When the most important matters are at stake it is unseemly to pay undue attention to the beauty of words. Of course, it does not mean that a speech should be devoid of all ornaments, but they should be toned down, austere, not unusual and, above all, adjusted to the subject of the speech. Though he agrees with the opinion that clarity demands the usage of apt words while ornamental style – metaphors, yet he believes we need to remember that only things which are not inapt can be verily ornamental. Despite the fact that several words may mean the same thing (the so-called synonyms), some of them are more commendable, noble, distinguished, attractive, or melodious. Like the syllables which contain a greater number of melodious sounds seem to be more euphonious, so the words composed of such syllables will sound much better than others, and the more energy they will possess, the more pleasurable for the audience’s ears they will be. The same rule applies for joining words: some clusters of words will sound better than others. However, words should be used in various ways. If we speak about terrible things it is more apt to use words which sound

²² Now lost.

²³ Cf. Arist., *Rhet.*, III. 1404 b 11 sqq.

²⁴ [...] *decentior equus, cuius adstricta ilia, sed idem velocior. pulcher aspectu est athleta, cuius lacertos exercitatio expressit, idem certamini paratior.*

unpleasant. As a rule, we may say that the best words are those which employ the loudest or most pleasant sounds. Noble words are always more effective than foul ones, and in the speech of an educated man there is no place for vulgarity. Words should be selected depending on the context. Words which sound beautiful in one context can be pompous in another, and words which seem too mundane to describe great things are adequate for the things less grand. As a word little elevated stands out in elegant speech, so in a plain one it becomes sublime and splendid. The style should not always be elevated, sometimes it should come down to earth. The commonness itself may occasionally give energy to things. Words can be divided into those proper for the subject matter, born in the imagination of the speaker, and metaphorical. As far as the former are concerned, a special distinction is granted to them due to their ancient origins (*dignitatem dat antiquitas*). It is their antiquity which allows them to make a speech more dignified and worthy of greater admiration. The man who particularly excelled at using such forms (archaisms) was Vergil. Forms such as *olli*, *quianam*, *moerus*, *pone*, *pellacia*²⁵ make his poems enjoy a unique respect. Nonetheless, some words should not be brought into the light from the darkest corners of the past. For example, *quaeso* is a sufficiently antique form and there is no need to use verb *quaiso*. *Oppido* was used by the previous generations, *antegerio* (same as the preceding form) can be used only by people who want to sound ostentatious. The verb *reor* is tolerable, *autumo* is used by tragedians, *proles* appears very rarely, the noun *prosapia* is devoid of any artistic sense. Quintilian gives also examples from Vergil,²⁶ Cicero,²⁷ and quotes an epigram against Sallust, “the thief of old Cato’s words”.²⁸ A man possessed by such a manner of speech will not choose the words adequate to the deeds, but he will discuss the facts not related to the subject solely for the opportunity to employ his favourite words.

²⁵ Other versions given by manuscripts are *pollicerent* or *policent*.

²⁶ Cf. Verg., *Catal.*, II.

²⁷ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, XI 6, 14.

²⁸ [...] *et verba antiqui multum furate Catonis, Crispe, Iugurthinae conditor historiae.*

Creating neologisms²⁹ (*fingerere*) was more acceptable among Greeks who did not hesitate to invent new nouns in order to reflect some sounds and feelings, and who were enjoying the same freedom as the first people who gave names to things. The Roman authors, as Quintilian points out, had the courage to create new words, but they have not achieved anything great. Quintilian recalls that in his youth there was a quarrel between Pomponius and Seneca, which is even visible in the forewords to their works; namely, the quarrel concerned the question of whether the phrase *gradus eliminat* (“he moves his feet over the threshold”) should be allowed in tragedy. Regarding neologisms created by derivation and inflection, we have some examples in Cicero,³⁰ such as *beatitas* and *beatitudo*. Derivatives can be created not only from nouns, but also from verbs, like, for example, *Sullaturit* (“he acts like Sulla”) in Cicero,³¹ or *Fimbriatus* and *Figulatus* (“similar to Fimbria and Figulus”) in Asinius Pollio. Many new words were coined by imitating Greek language; the person who particularly excelled at such neologisms was Verginius Flavus, but the forms *queens* and *essentia* seem to be excessively harsh. Quintilian believes that there is no reason to treat them with disdain, unless we are overly critical towards ourselves and have problems caused by the poverty of our language. Some forms, though, remain in our language for good. Recently, Messala created the word *reatus*³² and the emperor Augustus – *munerarius*.³³ Quintilian’s teachers did not allow him to use words such as *piratica*, *musica*, *fabrica*, and Cicero believed that words *favor* and *urbanus* have been introduced to the Latin language recently.³⁴ The Arpinate claims that Terentius was the first man

²⁹ Cf. Quint., I 5, 70: *sed res tota magis Graecos decet, nobis minus succedit: nec id fieri natura puto, sed alienis favemus, ideoque cum κερταύχενον mirati simus, incurvicervicum vix a risu defendimus* [But compounds are better suited to Greek than to Latin, though I do not think that this is due to the nature of our language: the reason rather is that we have a preference for foreign goods, and therefore receive κερταύχην with applause, whereas we can scarce defend incurvicervicum from derisive laughter (trans. H. E. Butler)].

³⁰ Cf. Cic., *De nat. deor.*, I 34, 95.

³¹ Cf. Cic., *Ad Att.*, IX 10, 6.

³² The situation of a person brought under a formal charge in a court of law.

³³ A person who organizes the gladiatorial games.

³⁴ Cf. Cic., *Ad fam.*, III 8, 3: *te, hominem non solum sapientem verum etiam, ut nunc loquimur, urbanum.*

who used the word *obsequium*, while Caecilius ensures us that Sisenna created the phrase *albente caelo* (“when the sky brightens”). Hortensius proposed to use the noun *cervix* in singular form, while the old authors used it only in plural. Quintilian disagrees with Celsus who forbid the orators to invent any new words. According to Cicero,³⁵ some words are inherited, i.e. they are used in their original sense, while others are derived, i.e. created from the original forms. If the form which we have coined seems slightly risky, we should safeguard ourselves by counter-measures such as *ut ita dicam, si licet dicere, quodam modo, permittite mihi sic uti*. The same practice can be followed when we employ bold metaphors. Everything can be said safely provided that we are aware that a single word or phrase is not the result of our flawed judgement. The Greeks have a very apt saying here, encouraging us to be the first to condemn our own hyperbole.³⁶ The words used in a metaphorical sense gain appreciation only in a specific context. Single words, when they stand on their own, have no significant value.³⁷ On the other hand, there is no word which would be completely unsophisticated, unless it is beneath the dignity of the subject (*dignitas*), with the exception of totally obscene words. Another question discussed by Quintilian pertains to continuous discourse (*sermo coniunctus*). Ornaments which we use in this type of discourse can be divided into two parts. First we need to contemplate the ideal of the style, then we need to ascertain what we want to enhance or downplay, express with energy or restraint, with joy or gloom, floridly or moderately, harshly or mildly, haughtily or subtly,

³⁵ Cf. Cic., *Part. or.*, V 16.

³⁶ Cf. Arist., *Rhet.*, III. 1408 b: ἄκος δ' ἐπὶ πάσῃ ὑπερβολῇ τὸ θρυλούμενον· δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν αὐτῷ προσεπιπλήττειν· δοκεῖ γὰρ ἀληθὲς εἶναι, ἐπεὶ οὐ λαονθάναει γε δ' ποιεῖ τὸν λέγοντα [*But whenever one has gone too far, the remedy may be found in the common piece of advice – that he should rebuke himself in advice; then the excess seems true, since the orator is obviously aware of what he is doing* (trans. J.H. Freeze)].

³⁷ Cf. Quint., I 5, 3: *uni verbo vitium saepius quam virtus inest. licet enim dicamus aliquod proprium, speciosum, sublime, nihil tamen horum nisi in complexu loquendi serieque contingit: laudamus enim verba rebus bene accommodata* [*A single word is more likely to be faulty than to possess any intrinsic merit. For though we may speak of a word as appropriate, distinguished or sublime, it can possess none of these properties save in relation to connected and consecutive speech; since when we praise words, we do so because they suit the matter* (trans. H. E. Butler)].

seriously or in a humorous way. Next we need to decide which metaphors, figures, maxims, methods, and word order types we will employ. The most important of all virtues is to shy away from mistakes (*vitio carere*). We cannot expect our speech to be ornamental if, in the first place, it is not probable.

The next subject discussed by Quintilian pertains to erroneous use of language. First of such language errors is known under the Greek name κακέμφοτον and it occurs in the situation when perverted use of language gives the phrase an obscene meaning, for example phrases *ductare exercitus*³⁸ and *patrare bella*,³⁹ used by Sallust⁴⁰ in their original and not inciting any reservations sense, in the times of Quintilian cause amusement. This, however, is the readers' fault, not the writer's. Still, we should avoid such trap falls as we have destroyed the nobility of language by our moral corruption, and thus we need to retreat before the victorious march of vices. Also an unfortunate collocation of words may provoke an obscene suggestion. There is a large group of readers who will find pleasure in interpreting indecent words, as if they were inspired by Ovid's *quaeque latent meliora putat*.⁴¹ Some believe that obscene meaning can be read even in the words that are furthest from indecency. For instance, Celsus sees κακέμφοτον even in this phrase of Vergil:⁴²

incipiunt agitata tumescere.

The fault closest to the lack of good taste is commonness, called ταπεινώσις, when we diminish the greatness of a thing or its meaning, for example "There seats a wart of stone on the mountaintop" (*saxea verruca*).⁴³ An error of a different nature, though equally grave, is to name things of little importance with big words, though such a practice is acceptable when we want to achieve a humorous effect. This is

³⁸ This can mean *ad libidinem abducere*.

³⁹ This may perhaps mean *paedicare formosum*.

⁴⁰ Cf. Sall., *Cat.*, 17, 7; *Iug.*, 38, 1; 21, 2.

⁴¹ Cf. Ovid., *Met.*, I 502.

⁴² Cf. Verg., *Georg.*, I 357. Vergil is speaking here of sea waters which start to get rough and increase.

⁴³ A quote from an unknown tragedy writer.

why we will not call a patricide a rogue (*nequam*), or a man keeping a prostitute a villain (*nefarius*), because the former term is too weak and the latter – too strong. Such an error will make our language lazy, common, barren, sad, unpleasant, and down-to-earth. Errors like these are visible particularly when contrasted with adjectives subtle, elegant, abundant, joyous, pleasant, and sophisticated. We should also evade the error called μείωσις, i.e. depreciation and inadequacy of expression, though this kind of an error is characteristic for an obscure style, rather than for an unornamented one. Next, Quintilian pays attention to tautology (ταυτολογία), i.e. reiteration (*iteratio*) of the same word or phrase. It is often encountered in Cicero⁴⁴ who does not pay attention to details. For example: *non solum igitur illud iudicium iudicii simile, iudices, non fuit*. Sometimes, after its name is changed, it is called ἐπανόληψις and numbered among the rhetorical figures. A graver error is ὁμοείδεια. The term pertains to the style which is not varied enough to evade boredom and monotony. Ὅμοείδεια attests to the lack of artism and causes particularly unpleasant effects, not only for the mind, but also for the ears, due to the monotony of thoughts, rhetorical figures, and word arrangement. Additionally, we should avoid macrology (μακρολογία), i.e. using more words than is required. As an example may serve the following sentence of Livy:⁴⁵ *legati non impetrata pace retro domum, unde venerant, abierunt*. Pleonasm (πλεονασμός) occurs when we overload our speech with redundant words, e.g. *ego oculis meis vidi* (it is enough to say *vidi*). Sometimes, though, pleonasm may be used to create a positive effect, especially if it is employed as an emphasis, like in Vergil:⁴⁶

vocemque his auribus hausi.

Nonetheless, if pleonasm is used unwittingly, unnecessarily, and excessively, it should be treated as an error. Περιεργία is superfluous scrupulosity, like when we call a curious man diligent, or a superstitious one religious. As a result, every word which does not serve to highlight

⁴⁴ Cf. Cic., *Pro Clu.*, XXXV 96.

⁴⁵ Cf. Liv., fig. 62, Hertz.

⁴⁶ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, IV 359: *and these ears drank in his words* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough).

the meaning (*intellectus*) and rhetorical decoration may be considered erroneous. Κακόζηλον, otherwise called ineffective affectation, appears in every kind of style. The term covers everything that is pompous, trivial, luscious, overly florid, too elaborate, or irregular. It also encompasses positive features carried to excess. The error happens when the mind loses its critical ability and allows itself to be deceived by false appearance of goodness, which is the worst offence against style. The corruption of style manifests itself in the words inadequately used and overly vivid, in incomprehensible argumentation, in discontinuous word order, in childish pursuit of similar or ambiguous words. Every κακόζηλον inevitably carries along a falsehood, though not every falsehood carries κακόζηλον. For the error lies in saying something in a way which is not natural, different than it should be, and different than it would be enough. A style can be corrupted in as many ways as can be used to ornament it.

To this group of errors should be added those which are the result of poor composition (ἀνοικονόμητον), incorrect use of figures (ἀσχημάτιστον), wrong placement of words (κακασύνθετον). There exists as well the so-called σαρδισμός, i.e. the speech in which different dialects are mixed, for instance Doric, Ionic, Aeolic, and Attic. A similar error is made by Romans when they mix lofty words with ordinary, old with new, poetic with common. This results in creating a *monstrum* identical with the one described by Horace⁴⁷ in the first verses of *Ars poetica*. As ornamental we should consider everything that goes beyond clarity and probability. Firstly, it lies in forming a clear conception of what we want to say, secondly, in giving this appropriate expression, thirdly, in making this shine, the process which we can aptly call stylistic elegance (*cultus*). Consequently, we should place enargeia (ἐνόργεια)⁴⁸ among the ornaments because vivid imagery of the speech or, as some call it, representation (*repraesentatio*) is something more than clarity. Ability to present the facts clearly and vividly is a great asset. The orator will not achieve the full desired effect if he appeals solely to the sense of hearing, and if the judge feels that the

⁴⁷ Cf. Hor., *Ars poet.*, 1-2: *humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam / iungere si velit.*

⁴⁸ Cf. Quint., IV 2, 63.

facts on the basis of which he needs to reach a decision are being merely presented by words instead of evoked and brought to life before “the eyes of the mind”. Quintilian believes that a particularly vivid example can be found in Vergil:⁴⁹

constitit in digitos extemplo arrectus uterque.

This is a description of two boxers ready to fight till death; it is obvious that comparisons are excellent for shedding light on the described subject. Some can be used among our arguments to fortify the evidence, some can serve to bring things to life.⁵⁰ When using this form of ornament one should pay particular attention to the subject of the comparison: it can be neither unclear nor unknown. Whatever is chosen to clarify something else has to be clearer than the object onto which it sheds light. Poets are sometimes allowed to use elaborate comparisons; again, as an example can serve Vergil:⁵¹

*qualis ubi hibernam Lyciam Xanthique fluenta
deserit aut Delum maternam inuisit Apollo.*

However, it would be out of place for an orator to describe everyday concerns by such intricate allusions. Even the type of comparison which applies to arguments (discussed previously⁵²) can ornament the speech and make it elevated, florid, pleasant, and impressive. The further from the subject the comparison is, the greater becomes the impression of novelty and surprise. Comparison can either precede or follow the subject which it refers to. The former is visible in the following verses from Vergil's *Aeneid*:⁵³

*inde lupi ceu
raptores atra in nebula,*

⁴⁹ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, V 426: *Straightway each took his stand, poised on his toes, and, undaunted, lifted his arms high in air* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough).

⁵⁰ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, II 355-356; IV 254-255.

⁵¹ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, IV 143-144: *As when Apollo quits Lycia, his winter home, and the streams of Xanthus, to visit his mother's Delos* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough).

⁵² Cf. Quint., V 11, 22.

⁵³ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, II 355-356: *like ravening wolves in a black mist* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough).

and the latter in this passage from *Georgics*:⁵⁴

*ut, cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,
addunt in spatia; et frustra retinacula tendens
fertur equis auriga, neque audit currus habenas.*

Reciprocal clause (ἀνταπόδοσις in comparison) uncovers both subjects of comparison before our eyes. A very good example can be found in Cicero:⁵⁵ *ut aiunt in Graecis artificibus eos auloedos esse, qui citharoedi fieri non potuerint, sic apud nos videmus, qui oratores evadere non potuerint, eos ad iuris studium devenire.* There are also shorter comparisons, for instance *vagi per silvas ritu ferarum*, or the phrase from Cicero's speech against Clodius:⁵⁶ *quo ex iudicio velut ex incendio nudus effugit.* Such comparisons reveal the opportunity for not only placing the subject before the eyes of the audience, but also doing this in both concise and energetic manner. Rightly is brevity praised if it is perfect in itself. On the other hand, brachylogy, i.e. brevity restricted only to things absolutely necessary, is less effective, though it can be used with excellent results when it expresses multiple things with few words, like in Sallust's description of Mithridates.⁵⁷ Fruitless efforts to imitate this form of brevity bring only confusion. Similar to brachylogy is emphasis (ἐμφασις). It is, though, much more developed, and reveals a deeper meaning than the one expressed by the words. There are two types of emphasis. One implies more than it says, the other expresses what is not said explicitly. An example of the former can be found in Homer,⁵⁸ when Menelaus says that the Greeks "descended" into the wooden horse, thus with one word emphasising its great size.

⁵⁴ Cf. Verg., *Georg.*, I 512-514: *as when from the starting gates the chariots stream forth and gather speed lap by lap, while the driver, tugging vainly at the reins is carried along by his steeds, and the car heeds not the curb!* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough).

⁵⁵ Cf. Cic., *Pro Mur.*, XIII 29: *when talking of Greek practitioners, that those men are flute-players who cannot become harp-players, so we see some men, who have not been able to make orators, turn to the study of the law* (trans. C. D. Yonge. Quintilian brings up one more passage from this speech, XVII 36).

⁵⁶ The speech is now lost.

⁵⁷ Sall., *Hist.*, fig. 2, 47, Dietsch: *Mithridates corpore ingenti, perinde armatus (Mithridates was of huge stature and armed for combat).*

⁵⁸ Hom., *Od.*, XI 523: *κατεβαίνομεν.*

In Vergil⁵⁹ we have a similar example: “they have slid down the rope” (*demissum lapsi per funem*). This phrase also emphasises the huge size of the wooden horse. The latter type of emphasis is based on either total omission of a word, or deliberate deletion from the phrase. As an example of omission may serve a fragment from Cicero’s speech:⁶⁰ *quodsi in hac tanta fortuna bonitas tanta non esset, quam tu per te, per te inquam, obtines: intelligo, quid loquar*. The Arpinate concealed the fact (one well-known from other sources) that he does not lack advisors who urge him to exercise cruelty. An omission can be also found in ἄ ποσιώπησις, in everyday expressions such as *virum esse oportet, homo est ille, vivendum est*. In principle nature is similar to art. However, it is insufficient for the art of speech to express a given subject in clear and comprehensible language. There are many methods of ornamenting the style. Even the natural and unsophisticated simplicity, which the Greeks call ἀφέλεια, contains some decorativeness, while punctilious scrupulosity in adhering to grammatical correctness gives the impression of sophistication and subtlety. Abundance may be the result of either the wealth of thought, or the flamboyance of language. The power of language can be expressed in various ways. Quintilian enumerates them, starting with δεινωσις which he treats as an excessive sublimity of little worth; next he writes about φαντασία, i.e. the imagination which helps us create mental pictures. Ἐξεργασία is a thorough elaboration on a subject, while ἐπεξεργασία is an additional reinforcement, repetition, and augmentation of the evidence and arguments. Similar to this is ἐνέργεια, whose primary function is to ascertain that the things we are saying are not superfluous. Finally, Quintilian mentions spite (*amarum*), the purpose of which is to insult, and ferocity (*acre*). Yet the real power of the speaker lies in his ability to strengthen or weaken the power of words.

The first method for strengthening or weakening is centred around the words used for description. For instance, we can say that a man who

⁵⁹ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, II 262.

⁶⁰ Cf. Cic., *Pro Lig.*, V 15: *If in this splendid fortune of yours your lenity had not been as great as you of your own accord – of your own accord, I say, (I know well what I am saying* (trans. C. D. Yonge). Quintilian probably quotes this passage from memory and he does not take the whole context of the speech into consideration.

was hit (*caesus*) was in fact murdered (*occisus*), that a dishonest man (*improbus*) is a ruffian (*latro*), and, on the other hand, that the man who hit someone (*pulsavit*) has merely touched them (*attigisse*), while the one who wounded someone (*vulneravit*) only pricked them (*laesisse*). Therefore, as Quintilian points out, there exist four major methods of amplification: augmentation (*incrementum*), comparison (*comparatio*), reasoning (*ratiocinatio*), accumulation (*congeries*). *Incrementum* makes a greatest impression when it bestows greatness even on the most trifling things. It can be achieved either using one degree of comparison or several, and it can not only reach the highest point but even overreach it. To render a great thing so magnificent that further edification is not possible is in itself a sort of augmentation. It is conceivable to strengthen the style in a less conspicuous though more efficient way by introducing a continuous series, where every next word is more powerful than the previous one. Because this form of amplification leads to a peak, the phrase which is the subject of comparison rises from the smaller to the greater elements. In Cicero's speech *Pro Cluentio*,⁶¹ in the passus concerning Oppianicus, the comparison aims to show that his actions were not merely criminal but much worse than criminal. In amplification, Quintilian stresses, we compare not only the whole with the whole, but also a part with a part, as for example in Cicero's speech against Catilina.⁶² As amplification can also be understood the accumulation (*congeries*) of words and opinions expressing identical meaning. Though in this case there is no leading to a peak by employing successive grades of strength, nonetheless the culmination is shown by amassing words. Quintilian again uses his favourite passage from Cicero.⁶³ The said passage resembles the figure called by the Greeks

⁶¹ Cf. Cic., *Pro Clu.*, XI 32.

⁶² Cf. Cic., *In Cat.*, I 1, 3.

⁶³ Cf. Cic., *Pro Lig.*, III 9: *quid enim tuus ille, Tubero, dstrictus in acie Pharsalica gladius agebat? cuius latus ille mucro petebat? qui sensus erat armorum tuorum? quae tua mens, oculi, manus, ardor animi? quid cupiebas? quid optabas?* [For, O Tubero, what was that drawn sword of yours doing in the battle of Pharsalia? against whose side was that sword-point of yours aimed? What was the feeling with which you took up arms? What was your intention? Where were your eyes? your hands? your eagerness of mind? what were you desirous of? What were you willing for? (trans. C. D. Yonge)].

συναθροισμός – though the figure is based on amassing a multitude of things, in Cicero it amplifies one thing only. Similar rules are observed when it comes to diminution (*ratio minuendi*). Some believe that hyperbole is also a form of amplification because it can be used to create both amplification and diminution.⁶⁴

Chapter five contains discussion on the concept of *sententia*. For the predecessors of Quintilian *sententia* meant primarily an emotion or an opinion.⁶⁵ The oldest and the most correct type of *sententia* is an aphorism called by the Greeks γνώμη. Both the Greek and Latin designation take their name after the similarity they bear to a debate or a judgement. The term is used extensively and is praiseworthy, even if it does not refer to a specific context, and can be used in various ways, e.g. *nihil est tam populare quam bonitas*.⁶⁶ Sometimes it refers to things, as in the words of Domitius Afer: *princeps, qui vult omnia scire, necesse habet multa ignoscere*. Some call this a part of enthymeme, others the beginning or the closure of an epichireme. It is more adequate to state that it can have a simple character, or that sometimes an argument can be attached to it.⁶⁷ Some take the following as the basis of classification: question (*interrogatio*), comparison (*comparatio*), negation (*infinitio*), similitude (*similitudo*), admiration (*admiratio*) etc. Relying on the opposites is noteworthy: *mors misera non est, aditus ad mortem est miser*.⁶⁸ Sometimes we use a direct statement: *tam deest avaro, quod habet, quam quod non habet*.⁶⁹ The effect is greater when we reverse the figure, e.g.: *usque adeone mori miserum est?*⁷⁰ Such a statement is much sharper than the phrase *mors misera non est*. A similar result will be achieved when we transfer the general to the level of the individual, for instance when we say simply: *nocere facile est, prodesse difficile*.

Enthymeme can be applied to everything that we encompass with our thought process, but in a strict sense it refers to the reflection connected

⁶⁴ Cf. Quint., VIII 6, 67 sqq.

⁶⁵ Cf. Glare 1990: 1736, s. v. *sententia*.

⁶⁶ Cf. Cic., *Pro Lig.*, XII 37.

⁶⁷ Cf. Sall., *Iug.*, 10, 7; Ter., *And.*, I 1, 41.

⁶⁸ The author of this saying is unknown.

⁶⁹ From a saying by Publilius Syrus.

⁷⁰ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, XII 646.

with the opposites (*ex contrariis*)⁷¹ because that function prevails over all the others. The use of enthymeme is not always restricted to the argument, but can also be practised as a stylistic ornament (*ornatus*).⁷² Epiphonema is the expression of emotions which accompany the closure of the case or the summary of arguments (*rei narratae vel probatae summa acclamatio*). There is also a rhetorical term called *noema* which can mean every form of reasoning. It is used in a particular sense to denote things which can be intelligible but are not expressed directly. A very poor impression is made by a saying in which ambiguity of the words meets with a false comparison. One group of orators pays attention solely to the composition of sayings, the other does not take this into account at all. Quintilian stresses that if it ever came to such a choice, he would prefer harshness (*horror*) of the old times than the audacity (*licentia*) of the new. We should aspire to the augmentation of our virtues. The first duty of an orator is to evade all faults, and to pay attention not to become only dissimilar from our predecessors when what we want to achieve is to be better than they were.

The last, sixth chapter of book eight contains Quintilian's thoughts on rhetorical tropes.⁷³ A trope (τρόπος) is an artistic (*cum virtute*) change of a word or an expression from the original and proper one to another. Among the experts on literature and language there is a constant and unresolved dispute on tropes: what types and kinds of tropes there are, how big the number of them is, and what the relationships between them are. Almost always the tropes which are used to express something also have a decorative function. The most frequently employed, and at the same time the most beautiful trope is *translatio*, i.e. μεταφορά.

⁷¹ This subject has already been discussed by Quintilian in book V 10, 2 and V 14, 2, where he provides an example of a saying from Cicero's speech *Pro Milone*, XXIX 79: *eius igitur mortis sedetis ultores, cuius vitam si putetis per vos restitui posse, nolitis [You, then, are sitting now as avengers of the death of that man, whom you would not restore to life if you thought it possible that his life could be restored by you (trans. C. D. Yonge)]*.

⁷² Cf. Cic., *Pro Lig.*, IV 10: *quorum igitur impunitas, Caesar, tuae clementiae laus est, eorum te ipsorum ad crudelitatem acuet oratio? [Shall then, O Caesar, the speech of those men spur you on to deeds of cruelty whose impunity is the great glory of your clemency? (trans. C. D. Yonge)]*.

⁷³ Cf. Chico-Rico 2003: 206.

As nature itself allowed us to use metaphor, it is such a graceful and pleasant trope that even if it is built into an outstanding speech it still shines brightly with its own light. We employ metaphor either out of necessity, or because it allows us to express more, or to achieve greater decorativeness. Metaphor is a more concise comparison. The difference between the two is that comparison relies on setting it side by side with the compared thing which we want to express, while metaphor relies on substituting this thing. Simple and apt use of metaphors decorates a speech, but excessive use makes it incomprehensible and abhorrent, while incessant use of metaphors leads to creating allegories and riddles. The gravest error lies in the conviction some people have that prose writers are allowed to employ the same measures as poets; but we must bear in mind that poets concern themselves with giving pleasure and, governed by poetic metres, they are often forced to express things with different words.

The above comments refer to synecdoche to an even greater degree. For metaphor was invented mostly to evoke feelings, show certain phenomena and bring them to life in front of the audience's eyes. Synecdoche is supposed to diversify the expression, so that from one element we can understand many, from a part a whole, from a genre a species, from what preceded the consequences, or the other way round. Not far from this kind of trope is metonymy, which lies in substituting one name with another; its task is to demonstrate not the thing that is spoken of, but to show why it is spoken of. Cicero⁷⁴ claims that orators call this phenomenon *hypallage*. *Antonomasia*, which replaces the proper name with something else, is used very often by poets, either in the shape of an epithet that, deleting the name which it ornaments, takes the place of that name, e.g. Tydides or Pelides, or by underlining the features which are specific,⁷⁵ or by pointing out the deeds with which someone has distinguished themselves.⁷⁶ As far as onomatopoeia, i.e. creating a name, is concerned, the Greeks regard it as one of the greatest virtues, while the Romans barely tolerate it. In this category of a metaphor we

⁷⁴ Cf. Cic., *Or.*, XXVII 93: *hanc hypallagen rhetores, quia quasi summutantur verba pro verbis, metonymian grammatici vocant, quod nomina transferuntur.*

⁷⁵ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, I 65.

⁷⁶ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, IV 495.

should make a distinction between what is called *abusio* (catachresis; used when there is lack of a proper term) and true metaphor employed to replace an existing word. Many poets, used to *abusio*, resort to words of similar meaning even when the given thing possesses a proper name. Among tropes which modify the meaning of an expression there is one left to discuss: μεταλήμψις, i.e. transsumption, which eases the passage from one trope to another. The nature of metalepsis is such that between the word “transferred” and the meaning which it is to achieve in the course of such a transfer it constitutes a sort of bridge which, while not expressing any meaning itself, makes the expression of meaning possible. The most frequently given example is: “I sing” means the same as “I extol”, while “I extol” means the same as “I say”, therefore “I sing” means “I say”.⁷⁷ The transsumption here is of course in the middle word, “I extol”. The remaining tropes are used to decorate the style and to avoid exaggeration. Such a decorative trope is ἐπίθετον, which the Romans rightly understand as *adpositum*, though some translate it as *sequens*. Poets use this trope with ever-growing frequency and enthusiasm because they are pleased when an epithet looks appropriate in its given context. Ἀλληγορία, understood by scholars as *inversio*, should suggest something contrary to the thing it describes. The most beautiful kind of speech is the one where analogy, allegory, and metaphor intertwine gracefully.⁷⁸ An allegory which is “darker” is called a riddle (*aenigma*). A trope which shows the opposite of the meaning, called εἰρωνεία or *illusio*, can also be considered as a type of allegory. Speakers employ it quite often, though in a less ostentatious way. For every thing that can be described more briefly and is explained in a more

⁷⁷ In original: *cano – canto – dico*.

⁷⁸ Cf. Cic., *Pro Mur.*, XVII 35: *quod fretum, quem Euripum tot motus, tantas, tam varias habere creditis agitationes, commutationes, fluctus, quantas perturbationes et quantos aestus habet ratio comitiorum? dies intermissus unus aut nox interposita saepe et perturbat omnia et totam opinionem parva nonnumquam commutat aura rumoris* [For what sea, what Euripus do you think exists, which is liable to such commotions, – to such great and various agitations of waves, as the stormes and tides by which the comitia are influenced? The interval of one day, – the lapse of one night – often throws everything into confusion. The slightest breeze of rumour sometimes changes the entire opinions of people (trans. C. D. Yonge)].

wordy manner solely for the purpose of decoration bears the name of περίφρασις, which is called in Latin *circumlocutio*, which is not an entirely apt description as it applies both to a fault and to an ornament. Strictly speaking, when a trope has certain grace it is called periphrasis, while whenever it contains errors it is called περισσολογία. For everything which does not help is a hindrance. Hyperbaton, i.e. transposition of the natural word order, is believed to be one of stylistic virtues. For often the speech becomes harsh, unpleasant, untidy, and chaotic if the words are adjusted in accordance with the required order, and every word the speaker brings up is adjoined to the closest word, even if the two cannot be directly connected. When hyperbaton is narrowed to two words only it bears the name ἀνάστροφή, which means inversion of word order, for example we commonly use *mecum, secum*, while many orators and historians employ the phrase *quibus de rebus*. Though if, for aesthetic reasons, a more remote place is chosen for a word, then we can observe a true hyperbaton, e.g. *animadverti, iudices, omnem accusatoris orationem in duas divisam esse partes*. The word order *in duas partes divisam esse*, while grammatically correct, would be harsh and inelegant. Poets, while dividing words, transfer them:

*Hyperboreo septem subiecta trioni.*⁷⁹

Such a practice, though, is not permissible among orators. Hyperbole is a skillful transgression of truth, and it can be employed both for magnifying and diminishing. It is used in various ways. For instance, we can speak of something which is greater than in reality: *vomens frustis esculentis gremium suum et totum tribunal implevit*⁸⁰ and:

*geminique minantur
in caelum scopuli.*⁸¹

⁷⁹ Cf. Verg., *Georg.*, III 381: *lying under the Wain's seven stars in the far north* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough). The division meant here is the separation of the words *septem* and *trioni*.

⁸⁰ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, II 25, 63: *vomiting filled his own bosom and the whole tribunal with fragments of what he had been eating reeking with wine* (trans. C. D. Yonge).

⁸¹ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, I 162-163: *loom heavenward huge cliffs and twin peaks* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough).

We can also make the subject more exalted by using a comparison, e.g.:

*credas innare revulsas Cycladas*⁸²

or

fulminis ocior alis,⁸³

or by employing certain signs:

*illa vel intactae segetis per summa volaret
gramina nec teneras cursu laeisset aristas.*⁸⁴

Sometimes one hyperbole can be made stronger by adding another one to it, as in Cicero's⁸⁵ words against Antonius: *quae Charybdis tam vorax? Charybdin dico? quae si fuit, fuit animal unum: Oceanus, medius fidius, vix videtur tot res, tam dissipatas, tam distantibus in locis positas tam cito absorbere potuisse.* There are equally numerous examples of hyperbole through diminution:

*vix ossibus haerent*⁸⁶

and the following distich from a certain humorous book by Cicero:⁸⁷

*fundum Vetto vocat, quem possit mittere funda:
ni tamen exciderit, qua cava funda patet.*

⁸² Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, VIII 691-692: *you would think that the Cyclades, uprooted, were floating on the main* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough).

⁸³ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, V 319: *swifter [...] than winged thunderbolt* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough).

⁸⁴ Cf. Verg., *Aen.*, VII 808-809: *She might have flown over the topmost blades of unown corn, and not bruised the tender ears in her course* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough).

⁸⁵ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, II 27, 67: *What Charybdis was ever so voracious? Charybdis, do I say? Charybdis, if she existed at all, was only one animal. The ocean I swear most solemnly, appears scarcely capable of having swallowed up such numbers of things so widely scattered and distributed in such different places with such rapidity* (trans. C. D. Yonge).

⁸⁶ Cf. Verg., *Ecl.*, III 103: *their skin scarce clings to the bones* (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough).

⁸⁷ *Vetto gives the name of farm to an estate which might easily be hurled from a sling, though it might well fall through the hole in the hollow sling, so small is it* (trans. H. E. Butler). This work is unknown.

But even here, Quintilian adds, some balance needs to be preserved. For though every hyperbole transgresses credibility (*ultra fidem*), it cannot transgress a certain aptness and fall into overt affectation (κακοζηλία). It is sufficient to recall that hyperbole lies, but not in order to use lies as a means of deception. It is employed by simple and uneducated people because in everyone there is a native tendency to make things bigger or smaller, and no one is satisfied with simple truth. Bending the truth, to a certain extent, is forgivable because we cannot unequivocally confirm that a lie has been said. Hyperbole is thus a virtue when the thing of which we speak is greater than the accustomed norm. For then the figure allows us to express this greatness, when normal words are lacking; and in such a case it is better if the words are greater than the truth, not vice versa.

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