

## DID THE GREEK EAR DETECT ‘CARELESS’ VERBAL REPETITIONS?<sup>1</sup>

### THE PROBLEM

In *Marginalia Scaenica* Jackson expresses eloquently what is perhaps the commonest view of verbal repetition in Greek tragedy:

The total indifference of the dramatists to the repetition of all such words extends even to cases where the fact of the repetition must have been forced on their attention by the order of the words.<sup>2</sup>

Even more trenchantly, Cook wrote in 1902:<sup>3</sup>

In Soph. *OT* 399ff. Oedipus says to Teiresias—

ὄν δὴ σὺ πειρᾶς ἐκβαλεῖν, δοκῶν θρόνοις  
 παραστατήσιν τοῖς Κρεοντείοις πέλας.  
 λάων δοκεῖς μοι καὶ σὺ χῶ συνθεῖς τὰδε  
 ἀγῆλατήσιν· εἰ δὲ μὴ ᾿δόκεῖς γέρων  
 εἶναι, παθῶν ἔγνωσ ἂν οἷά περ φρονεῖς.  
 Χο. ἡμῖν μὲν εἰκάζουσι καὶ τὰ τοῦδ’ ἔπη  
 ὀργῇ λελέχθαι καὶ τὰ σ’, Οἰδίπους, δοκεῖ.

Let us be honest: this sort of thing, [*sc.* the repetition of forms of *δοκέω*] even in Sophocles, is bad writing. Again, Euripides does his best to spoil the beginning of Talthybius’ famous description of the death of Polyxena by an equally undesirable iteration of the word *χείρ*: *Hec.* 523ff.—

<sup>1</sup> This article complements my ‘Verbal repetition in *Prometheus* and Greek tragedy generally’, *BICS* (2000), 81–99, and ‘Repetitions and their removal by the copyists of Greek tragedy’, *GRBS* 41 (2000), 123–39; it does, however, seek to go wider than tragedy. The research was undertaken as part of work for a Ph.D. at University College London. My thanks are due especially to my supervisor, Professor R. Janko, and to my examiners, Dr R. D. Dawe and Professor C. Carey, for their many helpful observations on my thesis. This article has benefited greatly from those who commented on a previous version at a seminar in University College London in March 2002, and from the criticisms and suggestions of *CQ*’s anonymous referee.

<sup>2</sup> J. Jackson, *Marginalia Scaenica* (Oxford, 1955), 198. By ‘such words’ Jackson means ‘common or not uncommon’ words (see Addenda A, p. 220); he does not distinguish between the repetition of important words and that of less important ones. Although he does not say so explicitly, he must be excluding from his strictures repetitions in anaphora, anadiplosis, and the like, or ones with an obvious purpose (such as those collected, for prose authors, by J. D. Denniston, *Greek Prose Style* [Oxford, 1952], ch. 5). Jackson goes on in the Addenda to say ‘It is of course a far cry to the days when Bentley, in his admirer’s [Housman’s] words, waded knee-deep in carnage to remove the repetitions, strewn over the text of Lucan . . . In the Attic dramatists the chief indignity an overtasked word has to apprehend is that the editor will apologise for its existence . . . the passages quoted are . . . examples . . . of a tolerance which Sophocles might have been wise to avoid if he had been writing a copy of Gaisford Verses, or Euripides if he had been competing for the Porson Prize.’

<sup>3</sup> A. B. Cook, ‘Unconscious iterations’, *CR* 16 (1902), 146–56 and 256–67, at 264 (the Greek is quoted in the text Cook used.) A. E. Housman expressed himself similarly in his article ‘On certain corruptions in the *Persae* of Aeschylus’, *American Journal of Philology* 9 (1888), 321 on the repetition *ἐκσωζοῖατο / ὑπεκσώζοιεν* in *Persae* 451–3; he wrote ‘suspicion is aroused . . . not by the mere repetition, for the Greeks are less careful than the Romans and the moderns to avoid this fault . . .’.

λαβὼν δ' Ἀχιλλέως παῖς Πολυξένην χερὸς  
 ἔστησ' ἐπ' ἄκρου χώματος, πέλας δ' ἐγώ·  
 λεκτοί τ' Ἀχαιῶν ἔκκριτοι νεανῖαι,  
 σκίρτημα μόσχου σῆς καθέζοντες χερσὶν,  
 ἔσποντο. πλήρες δ' ἐν χερσὶν λαβὼν δέπας  
 πάγχρυσον αἶρει χειρὶ παῖς Ἀχιλλέως . . .

In this extract (not representative of his article as a whole, which argues that such iterations are unconscious) Cook positively condemns verbal repetitions in which he cannot see a point. Such outright condemnation by editors is rare. They do, however, frequently draw their readers' attention to verbal repetitions, and may, as Jackson says, apologize for them, often by asserting that the 'Greek Ear' did not notice or was not offended by them:

W. S. Barrett, *Euripides Hippolytos* (Oxford, 1964), on *Hip.* 29–32 'γῆς τῇσδε so soon after τῇνδε γῆν need cause no qualms: the Greeks had no prejudice against such repetitions.'

E. R. Dodds, *Euripides Bacchae* (Oxford, 1960), on *Bac.* 647 πόδ' . . . πόδα 'the Greek ear, and Eur.'s ear in particular, was less sensitive to such things than ours.'

M. Fernández-Galiano, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey* (Oxford, 1992), on *Od.* 22.310 'ἐπεσσύμενος jars by its close proximity to the identically placed ἐπεσσύμενοι of 307.'<sup>4</sup>

W. Wyse, *The Speeches of Isaeus* (Cambridge, 1904), on *Isaeus* 8.7 ' . . . the inelegant reiteration of ἐκείνος in this sentence . . . '

These approaches are not the only ones adopted by editors. Some, none more consistently than von Sybel, lay verbal repetitions at the door of the copyist, and emend them away.<sup>5</sup> Many modern editors eschew judgementalism, and seek to find significance in verbal repetition.<sup>6</sup> Studying passages closely does indeed illuminate repetitions that at first appear careless, but it is hard to be convinced when one reads some works that many of the repetitions encountered have a point that is even in principle discoverable.

The view that the Greek Ear did not notice, and/or was not offended by verbal repetition without obvious point, is an attractive one. There is indubitably a natural tendency in speaking and in writing to repeat a word once used. (Psychological researchers have studied this 'priming' effect.)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Verbal repetition in Homer raises many issues that are beyond the scope of this article.

<sup>5</sup> L. von Sybel, 'De repetitionibus verborum in fabulis Euripideis', dissertation (Bonn, 1868), 35.

<sup>6</sup> P. E. Easterling ('Repetition in Sophocles', *Hermes* 101 [1974], 14–34, at 14) 'The purpose of this paper is to examine Sophocles' practice . . . if many of the repetitions in the work of this notoriously repetitious poet can be shown to have an explicable function then it will no longer be fair to make large assumptions about Greek indifference to repeated words. This is not at all the same thing as claiming that repetition must be significant; the point I hope to establish is that it may be.' Most forthrightly, writing of repetition in Latin poetry, J. Wills (*Repetition in Latin Poetry—Figures of Allusion* [Oxford, 1996]) in his epilogue 'Unfigured repetition' damns Cook for the 'troublesome term "unconscious repetition"', saying that the question is an aesthetic one; what is needed, according to him, is an understanding of the phenomenon of unfigured repetition within ancient poetics, not our own.

<sup>7</sup> A seminal work is D. Tannen, *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue and Imagery in Conversational Discourse* (Cambridge and New York, 1989), especially the chapter 'Repetition in conversation: towards a poetics of talk'. W. J. M. Levelt (ed.), *Lexical Access in Speech Production* (Oxford, 1993), 8 says 'There is both conversational . . . and experimental . . . evidence that speakers tend to have some preference for words that have recently been used by the

The question is why Greek authors did not resist this tendency by, for instance, removing such repetitions from their final versions. The practice of authors is not, of course, uniform. My *BICS* article (n. 1) found a measurable difference in the practice of Sophocles and Euripides, and a large difference between the tragic playwrights and Lycophron; and Dover shows a fall in recurrence (his term) in Thucydides compared with earlier authors, and also says ‘. . . there seems to be a clear chronological trend towards reduction in recurrence in oratory from Antiphon, via Lysias, to Demosthenes’.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Palm notes that Diodorus Siculus repeats words after a short interval eighteen times between 3.13.1 and 3.38.1 while his source for this passage, Agatharchides, does the same thing but once.<sup>9</sup>

An obvious way of discovering the attitude of the Greek Ear to verbal repetition is to interrogate the ancient Greeks. Once we begin to do so, however, we encounter a paradox. In many places ancient literary critics discuss the effectiveness of repetitions or partial repetitions of words, and ancient rhetoricians classify such repetitions. So how can it be claimed that the Greek Ear did not notice them? The clue is that almost all these ancient discussions are of what we should call ‘tropes’ or ‘figures of speech’, and not of the verbal repetitions that modern readers may find offensive or tiresome.<sup>10</sup> The following sections, therefore, contain only some representative examples of ancient references to figures of speech, but aim at a full coverage of discussions of repetitions not relating to such figures.

## ANCIENT REFERENCES

### *Aristotle*

Aristotle mentions repetition three times in Book 3 of the *Rhetoric*:

(a) In 1410a he quotes two verbal repetitions as examples of a figure he calls

interlocutor or by themselves. This tendency cannot be fully explained by the interlocutors sharing the same topic of discourse. . . . The experimental evidence shows that the preference for re-using words even extends to words that are semantically non-discriminative. There is, in addition, a strong recency effect, which makes it likely that the effect is caused by a temporary extra activation of the relevant lemma, [‘lemma’ is used by cognitive scientists with a meaning which is close to ‘word-stem’; an entity which contains syntactic and semantic information, but not phonology or morphology] due to the speaker’s hearing or using the word . . . the fluency of formulating seems to be served by re-using recently activated words. In short, as long as a theory of lexical selection only acknowledges semantic or syntactic reasons for selecting words, these imitation phenomena cannot be explained.’

<sup>8</sup> K. J. Dover *The Evolution of Greek Prose Style* (Oxford, 1997), 131–43. The chronological trend found in Dover’s sample is not demonstrable in the tragedians, nor in Diodorus (see n. 9.) More work on this would be useful.

<sup>9</sup> J. Palm, *Über Sprache und Stil des Diodoros von Sizilien* (Lund, 1956), 35–6. This was drawn to my attention by *CQ*’s anonymous referee. Palm argues that Diodorus’ changes to the wording of his sources are designed to bring the style of particular passages into harmony with the rest of the *Bibliotheca*.

<sup>10</sup> If the Greeks did not notice such repetitions, why did they notice, and apparently rejoice in, repetitions in figures of speech? That might be explained on the supposition that the Greek ear did not retain what it had heard for very long, and noticed and was affected only by repetition in very close proximity; but there are many examples of ring-composition and the like which assume recall of words used some time ago. Editors of tragic texts who are ready to dismiss a repetition for which they are unable to account as unimportant to and unnoticed by playwright and audience are just as ready to draw attention to repetitions that they admire, even ones that are not any recognized rhetorical figure.

παρομοιώσεις ('the similarity of the final syllables of each clause'). The first is ἄξιος δὲ σταθῆναι χαλκοῦς, οὐκ ἄξιος ὦν χαλκοῦ ('worthy of a bronze statue, not being worthy of a bronze coin'), and the second σὺ δ' αὐτὸν καὶ ζῶντα ἔλεγες κακῶς, καὶ νῦν γράφεις κακῶς ('when he was living you spoke ill of him and now you write ill of him').<sup>11</sup>

- (b) In 1412b he discusses the witty and rhetorically effective repetition of the same word with a different sense—*Ἀθηναίοις τὴν τῆς θαλάττης ἀρχὴν μὴ ἀρχὴν εἶναι τῶν κακῶν*, where the first ἀρχὴν means 'empire' and the second 'beginning'.
- (c) In 1413b–14a he seems first to say that repetition (τὸ πολλάκις τὸ αὐτὸ εἰπεῖν) is rightly disapproved of (ὀρθῶς ἀποδοκιμάζεται) in the written (γραφικῇ) style but used in the oral (ἀγωνιστικῇ) style; he then goes on to advocate changing the mode of expression (μεταβάλλειν) when repeating, and finally refers to *Iliad* 2.671–3:

*Νιρεὺς αὖ Σύμηθεν ἄγε τρεῖς νῆας εἵσας,  
Νιρεὺς Ἀγλαΐης υἱὸς Χαρόποιό τ' ἄνακτος,  
Νιρεὺς, ὃς κάλλιστος ἀνὴρ ὑπὸ 'ἔλιον ῥήλθε...*

According to Aristotle, Homer makes Nireus famous by repeating his name three times at the beginning of consecutive lines, though he nowhere afterwards speaks of him again.

In other works Aristotle sometimes uses the word ἀδολεσχία, which in Plutarch's essay *De Garrulitate* means 'talkativeness', of verbal repetition. If the *Tractatus Coislinianus* and *Prolegomenon Comoediae* VI Koster do reflect the lost second book of Aristotle's *Poetics*, then Aristotle included among the causes of laughter ἀδολεσχίαν 'ὡς ὅταν τις <δὲ> τῷ αὐτῷ ὀνόματι χρήσῃται'.<sup>12</sup> In *Sophistici Elenchi* 165b he defines ἀδολεσχία as τὸ πλεονάκις ταὐτὸ λέγειν, and discusses the subject in 173a; but his examples seem little more than verbal quibbles, as do those in *Topics* 130a and 154a, where he is discussing the incorrectness of definitions in which the same word is used twice (the term ἀδολεσχία does not appear here.)

### *Pausimachus*

The recent publication by Janko of the first book of Philodemus *On Poems*<sup>13</sup> gives access to a discussion of repetition in poetry by ancient literary critics that does not concentrate on, or even show interest in, figures of speech. The relevant passages are from Pausimachus and are found in columns 85–91 of *On Poems*.<sup>14</sup> Janko describes Pausimachus as 'the most radical of the euphonists'; his doctrine was that, whatever their genre, good poets excel and endure because of sound alone.

In columns 85–91 Pausimachus discusses the aesthetic qualities of sounds (especially sigma and lambda) and of accents, and whether the repetition of these

<sup>11</sup> Demetrius, *On Style* 26 and 211 cites the sentence with ἀποθανόντα before γράφεις, making the point clearer.

<sup>12</sup> On the vexed question of the Aristotelian origin of these works, see R. Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy* (London, 1984); in any case they deserve mention here.

<sup>13</sup> R. Janko, *Philodemus 'On Poems' Book One* (Oxford, 2000.)

<sup>14</sup> Janko (n. 13), 283–95; understanding the drift of the argument in this very lacunose papyrus is made easier by the rebuttal of Pausimachus' views by Philodemus later in the *On Poems*, not yet properly published but referred to by Janko in his footnotes.

sounds or of words containing them enhances their aesthetic qualities. He has six examples of repetition. Three are from Homer: the Nireus one cited above;

οὐδ' ἄρα Λωτοφάγοι μῆδονθ' ἐτάροισιν ὀλεθρον  
 ἡμετέροις, ἀλλὰ σφι δόσαν λωτοίο πάσασθαι.  
 τῶν δ' ὅς τις λωτοίο φάγοι μελιηδέα καρπὸν (Od. 9.91ff.)

and

ἐτέρῳ μὲν δουρὶ σάκος βάλεν, οὐδὲ διαπρὸ  
 ῥήξε σάκος. (Il. 21.164–5)

Two are from tragedy:

βαρὺς βαρὺς ξύνοικος, ὦ ξένοι, βαρὺς  
 (Sophocles fr. 686 Nauck<sup>2</sup> = fr. 753 Radt)

and

γενναϊότης σοι καὶ τρόπων τεκμήριον  
 τὸ σχῆμ' ἔχεις τόδ', ἥτις εἰ ποτ', ὦ γύναι·  
 γνοίῃ δ' ἂν ὡς τὰ πολλ' ἂν ἀνθρώπου πέρη  
 τὸ σχῆμ' ἰδὼν τις εἰ πέφυκεν εὐγενῆς. (Euripides *Ion* 237–40)<sup>15</sup>

The sixth is from Timotheus, and is restored as '<σεμ>νὸν δ' ὁ πλάτανος σ[εμ]νόν'.

Of these, only the Sophoclean one is a figure as normally recognized, and indeed the other repetitions might seem careless to some modern critics. Pausimachus, however, notices them for, and judges them by, their sound, as is made clear in the passage Janko quotes from Philodemus' rebuttal of Pausimachus in *PHerc.* 994 fr. 19, 19–20, 1, 5–6: τὸ 'τὰς τῶν αὐτῶν πολλάκι θέσεις οἰκειοῦν ἢ λυπεῖν διὰ τὸν ἦχον, ὡς τὸν "λῶτον" καὶ τοὺς "Λωτοφάγους" διὰ μὴδὲν <ἄλλο> ἄλυπον εἶναι ἢ διὰ τὸ τοῦνομα κατὰ τὸν ἦχον ἢ δὲ τῇ ἀκοῇ ὠρθοεπῆσθαι' and 'τῇ ἀκοῇ προσέπεσον καὶ ἡδεῖς' ('the claim that "frequent repetition suits or pains [the ear] on account of the sound, as the words "lotus" and "lotus-eaters" are painless for no other reason than because the word, pleasant to the ear in its sound, has been spoken correctly' and 'impinged sweetly upon the ears').<sup>16</sup> Pausimachus, that is, likes the repetition of *λωτο-* with its λ, but not that of *σάκος*, especially close to ῥήξε, 'τοῦ ξεῖ προσενοχλήσαντος τὴν ἀκοήν, προσφέρον τὸ σίγμα' (since the *x* troubles the ear too, as [the word *sakos*] contributes the *s*).<sup>17</sup> Pausimachus also likes *βαρὺς βαρὺς ξύνοικος, ὦ ξένοι, βαρὺς*, but does not like an alternative arrangement of the words 'βαρὺς ξύνοικος, ὦ ξένοι, βαρὺς βαρὺς'.<sup>18</sup> As for *σχῆμα* in *Ion*, Pausimachus is scathing: τὸ γὰρ προφέρειν "σχῆμα" δις οὐκέτ' ἀνασχετόν (for pronouncing [the word] *schêma* a second time is insupportable).<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, Pausimachus excuses the repetition of *σεμνον* by

<sup>15</sup> The papyrus has some lacunae and one error which are not indicated here; but ἂν is repeated as in the papyrus (for the second one the medieval manuscript has γε).

<sup>16</sup> Janko (n. 13), 283, n. 6. The translation of Philodemus here and elsewhere is Janko's. I have omitted the marks by which he indicates uncertain letters and supplements.

<sup>17</sup> Pausimachus *apud* Philodemus *On Poems* 1, col. 86, 9–11.

<sup>18</sup> Pausimachus *apud* Philodemus *On Poems* 1, col. 86, 26–col. 87, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Pausimachus *apud* Philodemus *On Poems* 1, col. 90, 5–7. Pausimachus introducing his Euripides quotation says ὅσα δὲ κακῶς μειχθέντα τοῖς ἤχοις εἰς τὴν πρώτην περισπᾶται, ταχέως ἐπιπολάζειν (But [words] with a bad mixture of sounds and a circumflex accent on the first (syllable) soon predominate).

Timotheus on the grounds that the change of accent from grave to acute makes the words different (ἐφθεγγόμειθ' ἄρ' οὐκέτι ταῦτό, ἀλλά τινα πτώσιν).<sup>20</sup>

Pausimachus is too extreme an euphonist to be taken as representative of the 'Greek Ear'; what he says, however, suggests strongly that the Greeks did notice repetition, but did not consider it a blemish in itself, but as intensifying the attractive or unattractive features of the word repeated.

### *Demetrius*

Demetrius *On Style* refers to repetition in several places: in the preliminary section (1–35) about sentence structure, and in the discussions of each of the four styles (χαρακτῆρες) which Demetrius distinguishes; there are differences of emphasis in what he says, explicable by the differences in context.

- (a) In 28–9, in the course of his discussion of the use of periods with symmetrical clauses, Demetrius criticizes jingling word-play, but says that assonance is sometimes useful and provides χάρις.
- (b) In 59–66, and later in 103, on the grand (μεγαλοπρεπής) style, Demetrius says that repetition can produce grandeur (μέγεθος and ὄγκος).
- (c) In 140, on the elegant (γλαφυρός) style, he says that though repetition produces force (δεινότητες) Sappho uses it for charm (χάριτες); he quotes:

παρθενία, παρθενία, ποῖ με λιπούσα οὔχη;  
 . . .  
 οὐκέτι ἤξω πρὸς σέ, οὐκέτι ἤξω.

and

Ἔσπερε, πάντα φέρεις, φέρεις οἶν, φέρεις αἶγα,  
 φέρεις ματέρι παῖδα.

- (d) In 211–14, on the plain (ἰσχνός) style, he recommends repetition for vividness.
- (e) In 267–8, on the forceful (δεινός) style, Demetrius deals with figures of repetition which provide force (δεινότης).

Demetrius, therefore, seems sensitive to nearby and patterned repetitions and to discordant jingles, but insensitive (or not sufficiently sensitive to mention them) to the somewhat more distant and haphazard or subtle repetitions that have worried modern critics.

### *Rhetor ad Herennium*

The exiguous relevant references in Greek authors can usefully be supplemented from Latin sources, if only because Greek and Roman writers on literary theory inhabited the same intellectual milieu (Philodemus survives because he was read in a villa near Herculaneum). The *Rhetor ad Herennium*, in his discussion of *compositio* (Artistic Composition) in 4.12.18, recommends the avoidance of *eiusdem verbi adsiduitatem nimiam* (excessive repetition of the same word), exemplifying this by *nam cuius rationis ratio non exstet ei / rationi ratio non est fidem habere*; it is relevant that in

<sup>20</sup> Pausimachus *apud* Philodemus *On Poems* 1, col. 89, 8–10.

4.11.16 (his example of an unsuccessful attempt at the Plain Style) he has two short sentences beginning *Postea dicit* and a third beginning *Post*.

In 4.14.20 the Rhetor discusses *traductio*:

traductio est quae facit uti, cum idem verbum crebrius ponatur, non modo non offendant animum, sed etiam concinniores orationem reddat, hoc pacto: 'qui nihil habet in vita iucundius vita, is cum virtute vitam non potest colere.' item: 'eum hominem appellas, qui si fuisset homo, numquam tam crudeliter hominis vitam petisset. at erat inimicus. ergo inimicum sic ulcisci voluit, ut ipse sibi reperiretur inimicus?' item: 'divitias sine divitis esse. tu vero virtutem praefer divitiis; nam si voles divitias cum virtute comparare, vix satis idoneae tibi videbuntur divitiae quae virtutis pedisequae sint.'

ex eodem genere est exornationis cum idem verbum ponitur modo in hac, modo in altera re, hoc modo: 'cur eam rem tam studiose curas, quae tibi multas dabit curas?' item: 'nam amari iucundum sit, si curetur ne quid insit amari.' item: 'veniam ad vos, si mihi senatus det veniam.'

*traductio* makes it possible for the same word to be frequently reintroduced, not only without offence to good taste, but even so as to render the style more elegant, as follows: 'One who has nothing in life more desirable than life cannot cultivate a virtuous life.' Again: 'You call him a man, who, had he been a man, would never so cruelly have sought another man's life. But he was his enemy. Did he therefore wish thus to avenge himself upon his enemy, only to prove himself his own enemy?' Again: 'Leave riches to the rich man, but as for you, to riches prefer virtue, for if you will but compare riches with virtue, riches will in your eyes prove scarcely worthy to be the lackeys of virtue.'

To the same type of figure belongs that which occurs when the same word is used first in one function, and then in another, as follows: 'Why do you so zealously concern yourself with this matter, which will cause you so much concern?' Again: 'To be dear to you would bring me joy—if only I take care it shall not in anguish cost me dear.' Again: 'I would leave this place, should the Senate give me leave.' (translation based on that of H. Caplan [Loeb, 1954])

In the view of this author, therefore, verbal repetition can *offendere animum*, but does not if it is part of the figure *traductio* (the same name is given to punning repetition).<sup>21</sup>

### Quintilian

Quintilian has in *Institutio Oratoria* 9.3.28–37, a lengthy discussion of figures of repetition.<sup>22</sup> There is nothing special here; but the work contains also two passages of particular relevance:

... tautologia ... eiusdem verbi aut sermonis iteratio. Haec enim, quamquam non magnopere a summis auctoribus vitata, interim vitium videri potest, in quod saepe incidit etiam Cicero securus tam parvae observationis, sicut hoc loco: 'non solum igitur illud iudicium iudicii simile, iudices, non fuit.' Interim mutato nomine ἐπανάληψις dicitur, atque est et ipsum inter schemata, quorum exempla illo loco quaerenda, quo virtutes erunt. (8.3.51)

... tautology ... the repetition of the same word or phrase. This, though not very strictly avoided by the best authors, may sometimes appear to be a fault, one into which even Cicero often falls, because he is indifferent to such obsession with trivialities, as in this passage: 'not only, judges, was this judgement unlike a judgement.' It sometimes has a different name,

<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere (4.21.29) the Rhetor ad Herennium calls this punning repetition *adnominatio*. Quintilian 9.3.69–70 also quotes the pun on *amari*, but as something to be avoided.

<sup>22</sup> He calls these figures generically *adiectio* and distinguishes them according to the location in their respective clauses of the repeated words. The text and translation are those of D. A. Russell (Loeb, 2001).

*epanalepsis*, and this too is one of the Figures, examples of which may be found below, where we discuss them as virtues.

Et quae idem significant <scio> solitos ediscere, quo facilius et occurreret unum ex pluribus, et, cum essent usi aliquo, si breve intra spatium rursus desideraretur, effugiendae repetitionis gratia sumerent aliud quo idem intellegi posset. Quod cum est puerile et cuiusdam infelicitis operae, tum etiam utile parum: turbam enim tantum modo congregat, ex qua sine discrimine occupet proximum quodque. (10.1.7)

<I know of> people who had the habit of learning lists of synonyms by heart, so that any one of a set of words could be brought quickly to mind, and also, if they used one, and found they needed it again soon after, they could avoid the repetition by selecting another with the same meaning. This is a childish occupation, a mark of effort ill-spent, and not even particularly useful; it simply assembles a crowd of words, out of which the speaker can snatch the nearest without any discrimination.

The first passage is evidence of the recognition by Quintilian that repetition could be a blemish, as well as a laudable figure of speech. The second demonstrates that the concept of deliberately avoiding repetition by using synonyms was not foreign to antiquity, even though its leading teacher of rhetoric did not think doing so worth the effort. This view of over-attention to words is consistent with Quintilian's attitude more generally.

### *Pseudo-Hermogenes*

A treatise *περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος* has come down to us under the name of Hermogenes; it is generally agreed to be spurious, but that is irrelevant here. The author categorizes some types of repetition. He uses the term *ἐπανάληψις* which he says has three purposes—*πράγματος διδασκαλία* (instruction), *προσώπου σύστασις* or *διαβολή* (support or slander of a person), and *ἥθους βεβαίωσις* (strengthening of a character). He quotes examples of each from Homer and from prose writers.<sup>23</sup> There is a separate discussion of the circumstances appropriate for repeating a terminology or varying it—*Πότε ταυτότητι ὀνομάτων χρησόμεθα καὶ πότε ποικιλίᾳ*.<sup>24</sup> When one term is the clearest it should be used repeatedly—here Homer is quoted:

ὥς δὲ χιῶν κατατήκετ' ἐν ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσιν,  
ἦν τ' Εὐρος κατέτηξεν, ἐπὴν Ζέφυρος καταχέυη,  
τήκομένης δ' ἄρα τῆς ποταμοὶ πλήθουσι ῥέοντες·  
ὥς τῆς τήκετο καλὰ παρῆια δακρυχεούσης. (Od. 19. 205–8)<sup>25</sup>

Synonyms, according to pseudo-Hermogenes, would not be so appropriate in that passage; but Homer properly uses the synonyms *δξύ*, *δριμύ*, *πικρόν* in:

ὥς δ' ὅταν ὠδίνουσιν ἔχῃ βέλος δξύ γυναικα,  
δριμύ, τό τε προΐεισι μογοστόκοι Εἰλείθυιαι,  
'*Ἥρης θυγατέρες πικρὰς ὠδίνας ἔχουσαι*' (Il. 11. 269–72)

<sup>23</sup> H. Rabe, *Hermogenes Opera* (Teubner, 1913), 423–5.

<sup>24</sup> Rabe (n. 23), 416–17. It is relevant to *ποικιλία* that Aristophanes, *Ranae* 1125–75 makes Euripides criticize the opening of *Choephoroi* for repetitiveness; but for saying the same thing twice in different words, not for repeating the same word.

<sup>25</sup> Oddly, he omits 204, *τῆς δ' ἄρ' ἀκουούσης ῥέε δάκρυα*, *τήκετο* δὲ *χρῶς*. The wording and punctuation of Homer printed in these citations are those found in Rabe's text of pseudo-Hermogenes.



Pseudo-Hermogenes goes on to give examples of the use of synonyms in Thucydides.<sup>26</sup> It appears therefore, at the least, that pseudo-Hermogenes, or his source, had been thinking about the appropriateness of verbal repetition.

### *Ancient textual criticism*

If the ancient ear did notice repetition, one would expect some evidence of that in ancient textual critics. As there is, though tantalizingly little:<sup>27</sup>

- (a) Servius ad loc. attributes *lumina* at Vergil, *Georgics* 1.6 to an authorial revision: *numina* fuit, sed emendavit ipse, quia postea ait *et vos . . . numina* (1.10).<sup>28</sup>
- (b) The occurrence of ἀμβρόσιος four times in the following nine lines of *Iliad* 14 was too much for Zenodotus and Aristophanes, who without great imagination read καὶ μεγάλους for ἀμβροσίους in 177:<sup>29</sup>

170

ἀμβροσίῃ μὲν πρῶτον ἀπὸ χροὸς ἱμερόεντος  
 λύματα πάντα κάθηρεν, ἀλείφατο δὲ λίπ' ἐλαίῳ  
 ἀμβροσίῳ ἔδανῳ, τό ρά οἱ τεθυωμένον ἦεν  
 τοῦ καὶ κινυμένοιο Διὸς κατὰ χαλκοβατές δῶ  
 ἔμπης ἐς γαίαν τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἵκετ' αὐτμή.  
 τῷ ρ' ἢ γε χροά καλὸν ἀλειψαμένη ἰδέ χαίτας  
 πῆξαμένη χερσὶ πλοκάμους ἔπλεξε φαεινοὺς  
 καλοὺς ἀμβροσίους ἐκ κράτος ἀθανάτους.  
 ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ἀμβρόσιον ἔανδ' ἔσαθ' . . .

175

- (c) A scholium in one manuscript of Aeschylus' *Septem* shows awareness of verbal repetition. The received text of *Septem* 275–8a is:

275

μήλοισιν αἰμάσσοντας ἐστίας θεῶν  
 ταυροκτονούντας θεοῖσιν ᾧδ' ἐπεύχομαι  
 θήσιν τροπαία πολέμιων δ' ἐσθήμασι  
 λάφυρα δαῖτων δουρίπληχθ' ἄγνοις δόμοις.  
 στέψω πρὸ νῶν πολέμιων δ' ἐσθήματα.  
 278a

278

The last word of 277 is ἐσθήματα in almost all of the manuscripts; 278a is not in several, and some have merely the first three words. An ancient editor recognized there to be an unresolved question whether Aeschylus himself repeated πολέμιων

<sup>26</sup> It is noteworthy that Dover (n. 8) finds a remarkable fall in repetition in Thucydides compared with his predecessors.

<sup>27</sup> In addition, there is a reference in Diogenes Laertius (3.65–6) (apropos of the texts of Plato current in his day) to repetition—ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ σημεία τινα τοῖς βιβλίοις αὐτοῦ παρατίθενται, φέρε καὶ περὶ τούτων τι εἴπωμεν. . . ἀντίσιγμα περιεστιγμένον πρὸς τὰς διττὰς χρήσεις καὶ μεταθέσεις τῶν γραφῶν—(And since certain critical marks are affixed to his works let us now say a word about these. . . The dotted antisigma [denotes] repetitions and proposals for transpositions) (text and translation by R. D. Hicks [Loeb, 1925]). I owe this reference to J. P. Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind* (London and New York, 1997); it seems, however, to be to repetitions of the sense (what we might call tautologies) rather than to verbal repetitions.

<sup>28</sup> This passage comes from the augmented text of Servius, known as *Servius Auctus* or *Servius Danielis*. J. E. G. Zetzel ('Emendavi ad Tironem', *HSCP* 77 [1973], 235–6) maintains that the story of an authorial change is totally fictitious; however that may be, the passage demonstrates that the concept of changing a text to remove a repetition was plausible to a late Roman critic.

<sup>29</sup> The authority for this is the *scholia vetera* (Erbse [Berlin, 1973], 3.600), namely A<sup>im</sup> Ζηνόδοτος καὶ Ἀριστοφάνης <καλοὺς> καὶ μεγάλους' and T<sup>ii</sup> τινές <καλοὺς> καὶ μεγάλους', ἵνα μὴ λυπῇ τὸ ἀμβρόσιον συνεχές ὄν. The verb used (λυπεῖν) is familiar in this context from Pausimachus.

ἔσθηματα/σι, and proposed an emendation which would remove half of the repetition; the scholium<sup>30</sup> reads

ἐν τισι τῶν ἀντιγράφων μετὰ τὸν στίχον τοῦτον κείται τὸ  
 στέψω πρὸ ναῶν πολεμίων ἔσθηματα,  
 καὶ οὐ δῆπου κατὰ λήθην ὁ τοιοῦτος στίχος εἰκῇ παρεγγέγραπται. ἡ δὲ τελευταία λέξις  
 τοῦ πρὸ τούτου στίχου 'ἔσθημασι' ἔχει· εἰ γοῦν τοῦθ' οὕτως ἔχει, συμβιβάζ(οι) ἂν τις  
 ταῦτα, ἀντὶ τοῦ 'ἔσθημασι' 'πτώμασι' μεταγράψας, καὶ ἔχει τὸ ὅλον καλῶς, λέγοντος  
 τοῦ Ἑτεοκλέους ὅτι· πεσόντων τῶν πολεμίων ἀναθήσω πρὸ τῶν ναῶν τὰς τῶν πολεμίων  
 στολὰς.

In some copies after this line [278] there is found

στέψω πρὸ ναῶν πολεμίων ἔσθηματα,  
 and indeed this line has not been inserted carelessly at random. The final word of the previous  
 line has 'ἔσθημασι'. This being so, one might accept those words, substituting 'πτώμασι' for  
 'ἔσθημασι'. The whole passage is satisfactory, since Eteocles says 'when the enemy have fallen I  
 shall dedicate the clothes of the enemy in front of the temples.'

## CONCLUSION

Pausimachus, therefore, the Rhetor ad Herennium on *tradio*, Quintilian, and pseudo-Hermogenes seem to be exploring the effect of repetitions in close proximity which are not part of recognized figures and which some modern commentators might call careless. The view that they were not noticed is therefore untenable. The Rhetor, Pausimachus as reported by Philodemus, and Quintilian judge the merits of such repetitions by aesthetic criteria, pseudo-Hermogenes by the demands of clarity. There is no hint that the less meritorious repetitions are careless or unintentional; the issue is one of literary judgement, good or bad; when Servius reports a revision by Vergil to remove a repetition, he is again seeing the matter in terms of literary judgement, and though the scholium on *Septem* is harder to interpret, the commentator seems to be expressing a preference for one term over another, not adjudicating between readings in the way a modern textual critic would. Similarly with Quintilian in 10.1.7, where he regards avoiding repetition of the natural word as an undesirably artificial proceeding. If a modern textual critic had proposed the reading of Zenodotus and Aristophanes of Byzantium in *Iliad* 14 the justification would have been that the third occurrence of ἀμβρόσιος was a scribal error due to the other occurrences nearby. But presumably the Alexandrian critics reasoned differently, and saw the received text as blemished and unworthy of Homer.

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<sup>30</sup> O. L. Smith (ed.), *Scholia in Aeschylum* (Teubner, 1982), pars II, fasc. 2. The manuscript with the scholium is Athous Iberorum 209 (I).