

DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS AND THE METHOD OF METATHESIS

I. INTRODUCTION

In the fourth chapter of his work *On Composition*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus compares the subject of this treatise (composition, σύνθεσις) to the Homeric goddess Athena.¹ Just as Athena makes the same Odysseus appear now in one form, now in another, so composition, taking the same words, makes the ideas (τὰ νοήματα) appear at one time ‘unlovely, mean and beggarly’, and at another time ‘sublime, rich and beautiful’ (Comp. 4.19.18–20.10). This elegant comparison, which illustrates the power of composition, also offers an instructive background to one of the most interesting aspects of Dionysius’ rhetorical works, namely his method of metathesis (μετάθεσις).² The rearrangement of texts, which changes their character just as Athena can change the form of Odysseus, is one of the three methods of literary criticism of which Dionysius makes use, besides the analysis of longer text fragments and the comparison (σύγκρισις) of two or more authors.³ The method of metathesis can be

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the XIVth Biennial Conference of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric held in Madrid and Calahorra (July 2003). I wish to thank Ineke Sluiter, Doreen Innes, Jeroen Bons, Jan van Ophuijsen, Dirk Schenkeveld, and Stephen Usher for their valuable suggestions. References to the works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Dion. Hal.) are to the chapter, page, and line number of the edition by H. Usener and L. Radermacher, *Dionysii Halicarnasei quae exstant* 5 and 6 (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1899 and 1904–1929). The English translations of Dionysius and of the passages cited in his works have been taken from S. Usher, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Critical Essays* 1 and 2 (Cambridge, MA and London, 1974 and 1985). In many cases, however, his translations have been adapted. Apart from Usher (1974) and Usher (1985), the following works are referred to by abbreviations: S. F. Bonner, *The Literary Treatises of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, A Study in the Development of Critical Method* (Cambridge, 1939); C. Damon, ‘Aesthetic response and technical analysis in the rhetorical writings of Dionysius of Halicarnassus’, *Museum Helveticum* 48 (1991), 33–58; N. A. Greenberg, ‘Metathesis as an instrument in the criticism of poetry’, *TAPA* 89 (1958), 262–70; R. Janko, *Philodemus On Poems Book I, Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford, 2000).

² While preparing this paper for publication, I received a special issue of the journal *Linguistica e Letteratura* 29.1–2 (2004), in which the procedure of rewriting texts is discussed from various angles. See esp. the contributions by L. Spina, ‘Esercizi di stile: riscritture e metamorfosi testuali. Un’introduzione’ (9–12), and by M. Grimaldi, ‘A proposito dell’esegesi retorico-grammaticale: qualche esempio di metafrasi/riscrittura’ (21–49). On the various applications of the term ‘metathesis’ in ancient grammar and rhetoric, see U. Schindel, ‘Enargia, Metathesis, Metastasis: Figurendefinitionen bei Isidor und Quintilian’, *Glotta* 71 (1993), 112–19 at 113. In this paper, the word ‘metathesis’ refers to the technique of rewriting a given text, whether in prose or poetry, in order to make a comparison between the first and second version, thereby pointing to certain virtues, faults or particularities in the style of the original. Dionysius of Halicarnassus usually refers to this technique with the verb μετατίθημι (‘to change’, ‘to transpose’, ‘to place differently’), but he also uses other verbs, such as ἀλλάττω (‘to change’, ‘to alter’) and other compound verbs with μετα, including μετακινέω (‘to change’, ‘to change places’), μεταπίπτω (‘to undergo a change’) and μεταρρυθμίζω (‘to change the form’).

³ The standard work on Dionysius’ critical methods is that of Bonner (1939), who has shown that Dionysius’ use of these methods became increasingly sophisticated in the course of his

considered a language experiment intended to demonstrate the merits and defects, or more generally the particularities of a text.⁴

Dionysius' use of metathesis seems to belong to a tradition of ancient 'language experiments'.⁵ Early examples of the rewriting of texts can be found in Plato and Aristotle.⁶ Pseudo-Demetrius and, less frequently, pseudo-Longinus and Cicero employ metathesis to illustrate the virtues or faults of a text.⁷ Finally, the so-called *kritikoi* who appear in Philodemus' *On Poems* used metathesis to prove that the

career. Although Bonner points to some interesting cases of the rewriting method, he does not give a systematic analysis of Dionysius' use of metathesis. A detailed study is lacking, although many scholars have observed the importance of the metathesis procedure in Dionysius' rhetorical works. See, e.g., W. Rhys Roberts, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus, The Three Literary Letters* (Cambridge, 1901), 11–12; W. Rhys Roberts, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus, On Literary Composition* (London, 1910), 30–1; G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (London, 1965), 196 and 224; Damon (1991), 50–2; C. J. Classen, 'Rhetorik und Literaturkritik', in F. Montanari (ed.), *La philologie grecque à l'époque hellénistique et romaine*, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique 40 (Genève, 1994), 338–47; L. Spina, 'Riscrivere "Candaule"', *Rhetorica* 17 (1999), 125–7; L. Pernot, *La Rhétorique dans l'Antiquité* (Paris, 2000), 182.

⁴ A modern example of the method of metathesis can be found in J. Denniston, *Greek Prose Style* (Oxford, 1952), 7, who intends to prove the power of the first sentence of Herodotus' *Histories* by changing the order of the first five words: 'Put the first five words in any other order, and the thing is ruined.' The formulation of this analysis, which clearly echoes the story about the opening words of Plato's *Republic* (see n. 6), resembles the conclusions that Dionysius derives from rewriting Homer or Herodotus in order to prove the quality of their texts: compare, e.g., *Comp.* 4.17.6–14 (paragraph II below).

⁵ I hope to present a more detailed discussion of this tradition of ancient language experiments in my Ph.D. thesis 'Between rhetoric and grammar. Dionysius of Halicarnassus on language, linguistics, and literature'.

⁶ Somewhere at the beginning of this tradition stands Socrates' criticism of the 'Midas epigram' in Plato's *Phaedrus* (264D). There, Socrates states that a rearrangement of the verses of this poem would not affect its quality, which proves that it is a bad poem. Although Plato does not use the word metathesis, it is clear that Socrates is thinking of rearrangement as a test of the quality of a text. The idea is that it would be impossible to change the order of the elements of a good poem or a good speech. On this passage and the Platonic notion of 'organic composition', see C. M. J. Sicking, 'Organische Komposition und Verwandtes', *Mnemos.* 16 (1963), 225–42; M. Heath, *Unity in Greek Poetics* (Oxford, 1989), 12–27; D. Armstrong, 'The impossibility of metathesis: Philodemus and Lucretius on form and content in poetry', in D. Obbink (ed.), *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace* (New York and Oxford, 1995), 210–32 at 222 n. 32; A. Ford, *The Origins of Criticism, Literary Culture and Poetic Theory in Classical Greece* (Princeton and Oxford, 2002), 240–4. Another early example of the rewriting of texts is Socrates' metathesis of the opening of the *Iliad* into prose (*R.* 3.392ff.), which shows how Homer would have spoken himself, if he had not impersonated Chryses. On this passage, see G. R. F. Ferrari, 'Plato and poetry', in G. A. Kennedy (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, 1: *Classical Criticism* (Cambridge, 1989), 92–148; L. Spina, 'Platone "traduttore" di Omero', *Eikasmos* 5 (1994), 173–9. Dionysius himself refers to the famous story about the writing tablet on which Plato wrote down various arrangements of the opening words of the *Republic* (*Comp.* 25.133.7–13); on this story, → L. Spina, 'Riscrivere "Candaule"', *Rhetorica* 17 (1999), 111–36 at 111–15. In Aristotle, we find the first instances of metathesis as a didactic method, employed to point out the difference between deliberative and epideictic rhetoric (*Rhet.* 1367b–1368a), and the difference between loan-words and standard terms (*Poet.* 22.1458b15–1459a4). There also seems to be an interesting connection between the critical method of metathesis and the preliminary rewriting exercises that were part of the educational system. See below, paragraph III.2.

⁷ Janko (2000), 227 n. 2 lists all the instances of metathesis in pseudo-Demetrius' *On Style*. See also Damon (1991), 52 n. 100. Pseudo-Longinus employs metathesis e.g. in *Subl.* 39.4 and 40.2–3 (where the procedure is left to the reader), and Cicero uses the same method in *Orator* 81, 214–15 and 232–3. Similar to the rhetoricians' method of metathesis is the technique of *μετάληψις* (paraphrasing) that is employed by the grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus: see

quality of poetry does not depend on content or words, but only on word order and the sound that supervenes upon it.⁸ The possibility of metathesis played an important role in the exciting debate between Philodemus and his opponents, the *kritikoi*, whose theories on composition seem to have influenced Dionysius of Halicarnassus.⁹ The reasoning of these critics seems to have been that if the composition of a verse is changed, the *idion* (the particularity) of poetry, that is the euphony that supervenes on the composition, will be lost, although the meaning and the words have not changed.¹⁰ Philodemus, however, objected that, if the composition is altered, the meaning of a verse will change as well.¹¹

In this article, I will focus on the use of metathesis by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. I will argue that, in the rhetorical works of this author, metathesis is a very useful and versatile method, which he applies in order to point out the virtues, faults, or particularities of certain original texts. Metathesis enables Dionysius and his readers to compare such an original text with a new formulation of the same thought. Therefore, it is an important didactical instrument for Dionysius, whose aim it is to teach his audience to write in a correct and convincing style.

II. METATHESIS IN PHILODEMUS' *ON POEMS* AND DIONYSIUS' *ON COMPOSITION* 4

While modern scholars have paid due attention to the views of Philodemus and his opponents on metathesis, they seem to underestimate the usefulness of Dionysius' language experiments. Although Bonner (1939) has already shown how important Dionysius' rewritings are with regard to his critical method, these language experiments have been the target of criticism in more recent publications.¹² When

I. Sluiter, *Ancient Grammar in Context, Contributions to the Study of Ancient Linguistic Thought* (Amsterdam, 1990), 111–17.

⁸ Cf. Janko (2000), 226–7.

⁹ Cf. D. M. Schenkeveld, *Oi kritikoi in Philodemus*, *Mnemos.* 21 (1968), 176–215. Although K. Goudriaan, *Over Classicisme. Dionysius van Halicarnassus en zijn program van welsprekendheid, cultuur en politiek*, (Amsterdam, 1989), 153–4 has objected that Dionysius nowhere mentions the *kritikoi*, Janko's edition of Philodemus' *On Poems* 1 shows that there are many resemblances between the theories of the *kritikoi* and the doctrine of Dionysius' *On Composition*. Compare, for example, their ideas on the hierarchy of sounds (Janko [2000], 178) and on the distinction between rational and irrational judgement (Janko [2000], 121). On the *kritikoi*, see now also J. I. Porter, *Oi kritikoi: a reassessment*, in J. G. J. Abbenes, S. R. Slings, and I. Sluiter (edd.), *Greek Literary Theory after Aristotle, A Collection of Papers in Honour of D. M. Schenkeveld* (Amsterdam, 1995), 83–109 and Janko (2000), 120ff. On the discussion between Philodemus and his opponents about the possibility or impossibility of metathesis, see Armstrong (n. 6), and S. Oberhelman and D. Armstrong, 'Satire as poetry and the impossibility of metathesis in Horace's *Satires*', in D. Obbink (ed.), *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace* (New York and Oxford, 1995), 233–54.

¹⁰ Cf. Porter (n. 9), 88. In an ironical context, Horace (*Sat.* 1.4.53–62) turns things around by employing metathesis to prove the *irrelevance*, instead of the power, of composition: see K. Freudenburg, 'The satires in the context of late Republican stylistic theory', in id., *The Walking Muse: Horace and the Theory of Satire* (Princeton, 1993), 109–84, at 146–7, and Oberhelman and Armstrong (n. 9), 242–4.

¹¹ Cf. F. Sbordone, *Sui papiri della Poetica di Filodemo* (Naples, 1983), 36; Janko (2000), 217 n. 7 and 227 n. 2.

¹² Bonner (1939), 92–3: 'It has already been observed that the method of recasting an author's remark in order to bring home a criticism is among the most satisfactory methods of critical exposition, and one which calls for most exertion on the part of the critic.' Apart from Greenberg (1958), who thinks that the *kritikoi* in Philodemus were more successful in

discussing Dionysius' method of metathesis, modern scholars usually refer to an article by Greenberg (1958), who treated 'metathesis as an instrument in the criticism of poetry'. Greenberg holds the view that the *kritikoi* who are cited by Philodemus were much more successful in their application of metathesis than Dionysius. He draws this conclusion after having discussed only one instance of this method from Dionysius' works, namely the rewriting of some verses from the *Iliad* in *Comp.* 4:

1. *Dion. Hal. Comp.* 4.15.3–16.6

Homer, *Iliad* 12.433–5:

ἀλλ' ἔχεν ὥστε τάλαντα γυνὴ χερνήτης
ἀληθής,
ἣ τε σταθμὸν ἔχουσα καὶ εἴριον ἀμφὶς ἀνέλκει
ἰσάζουσ', ἵνα παισὶν ἀεικέα μισθὸν ἄροιο.

Firmly they stayed like the scales in the
hands of a labouring woman
Carefully holding the balancing arm and
weighing the wool
Poising it level, to earn for her children a
beggarly pittance.

Dion. Hal.'s metathesis:

ἀλλ' ἔχεν ὥστε γυνὴ χερνήτης τάλαντ'
ἀληθής,
ἣ τις εἴριον ἀμφὶ καὶ σταθμὸν ἔχουσ' ἀνέλκει
ἰσάζουσ', ἵν' ἀεικέα παισὶν ἄροιο μισθόν.

They stayed firmly like the scales in the
labouring woman's hands
As she carefully held the balancing arm
aloft and weighed the wool,
Level-poised, that her children might a
beggarly pittance receive.

2. *Dion. Hal. Comp.* 4.16.7–18.3

Homer, *Iliad* 13.392–3:

ὥς δ' πρόσθ' ἵππων καὶ δίφρου κείμεν
τανυσθεῖς,
βεβρυχώς, κόνιος δεδραγμένος
αἵματοέσσης.

So there outstretched was he lying,
his steeds and his chariot before,
Groaning, convulsively clutching the
dust that was red with his gore.

Dion. Hal.'s metathesis:

ὥς δ' πρόσθ' ἵππων καὶ δίφρου κείμεν
τανυσθεῖς,
αἵματοέσσης κόνιος δεδραγμένος,
βεβρυχώς.

So there outstretched was he lying, his
steeds and his chariot before,
At the dust that was red with his gore
clutching convulsively, groaning.

In order to prove the power of composition, Dionysius changes not only the word order, but also the metre of the Homeric verses. In text 1, the dactylic hexameters are changed into so-called 'prosodiacs', which Dionysius compares to the 'Priapean' or 'ithyphallic' lines of Euphorion. In text 2, he rewrites the hexameters in 'Ionic tetrameters', which he compares to the effeminate lines of the Hellenistic poet Sotades. In linking specific metres with a specific ethos, Dionysius is, of course, in line with other ancient critics.¹³ He concludes that 'when the choice of words remains unchanged and

their application of metathesis than Dionysius, other scholars have criticized Dionysius' method as well. E. Gabba, *Dionysius and The History of Archaic Rome* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford, 1991), 66 remarks that Dionysius' 'stylistic criticism of Thucydides brings him to the point of *daring* to rewrite the text of Thucydides in a fuller and more normal style' (my emphasis). With regard to Dionysius' recasting of Thucydides 3.81ff., Usher (1974), 458 remarks that 'Some modern students might prefer Dionysius's version, but if they were to do so they would be seen to share his incomplete understanding of Thucydides's view of history.'

¹³ Cf. the 'effeminate' rhythm that, according to Pseudo-Demetrius 189, characterizes the Sotadean metathesis of a Homeric verse.

only the arrangement is altered, the rhythm and the metre is changed, and with it the structure, the complexion, the character, the feeling and the general effectiveness of the lines'.¹⁴ Greenberg opposes this technique of rewriting to the metathesis practised by the critics who appear in Philodemus' *On Poems*. He points to a fragment of this work that Janko (2000) has attributed to the critic Heracleodorus. In this fragment, the importance of word order (and the supervening sound) is proven by a rearrangement (*metathesis*) of *Iliad* 16.112–14, which preserves the dactylic hexameter of the original:¹⁵

3. Philodemus, *Po.* 1.39; Heracleodorus F 39 (Janko)

Homer *Iliad* 16.112–14:

ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ'
ἔχουσαι,
ὅππως δὴ πρῶτον πῦρ ἔμπεσε νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν.

Ἐκτωρ Αἴαντος δόρυ μείλινον ἄγχι
παρὰ στὰς πλῆξ'...

Tell me now, ye Muses, that have
dwellings on Olympus, how fire was first
flung upon the ships of the Achaeans.
It was Hector that drew nigh to Aias and
smote his ashen spear...
(Translation Murray [1957])

Heracleodorus' metathesis:

ἔσπετε Μοῦ(σ)αι Ὀλύμπια δώματα
νῦν μοι ἔχουσαι
ὅππως πρῶτον δὴ νηυσὶν πῦρ ἔμπεσ'
Ἀχαιῶν

Αἴαντος δόρυ μείλινον Ἐκτωρ

Tell, Muses, me who now Olympus haunts,
how first the Grecian ships assailed the
fire.
Hector of Aias on the ashen spear...
(Translation Janko [2000])

We should observe, though, that Heracleodorus' hexameters contain serious errors. The normal caesura (the *penthemimeral* caesura after the fifth verse-element or the *trochaic caesura* after the first short of the sixth verse-element) is lacking in lines one and three.¹⁶ Of Homer's hexameters without caesura, most have word-end after the fourth marked element, which Heracleodorus' verses do not have either.¹⁷ Besides, the distribution of information is very strange. After he has compared the use of metathesis by Dionysius, who changes the metre of the original, and the *kritikoi*, who preserve dactylic hexameters (deficient as they may be), Greenberg draws the following conclusion:

¹⁴ Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 4.17.6 14: ἐδυνάμην δ' ἂν ἔτι πολλὰς ἰδέας μέτρων καὶ διαφόρων εἰς τὸν ἡρωϊκὸν ἐμπίπτουσας στίχον ἐπιδεικνύναι, τὸ δ' αὐτὸ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὀλίγου δεῖν πᾶσι συμβεβηκὸς μέτροις τε καὶ ῥυθμοῖς ἀπιφαίνειν, ὥστε τῆς μὲν ἐκλογῆς τῶν ὀνομάτων τῆς αὐτῆς μενίσσης, τῆς δὲ συνθέσεως μόνης μεταπεσοῦσης τὰ τε μέτρα μεταρρυθμίζεσθαι καὶ συµμεταπίπτειν αὐτοῖς τὰ σχήματα, τὰ χρώματα, τὰ ἦθη, τὰ πάθη, τὴν ὅλην τῶν ποιημάτων ἀξίωσιν. ('I could illustrate many further different types of metre, all falling under the category of the heroic line, and showing that the same thing is true of almost all the other metres and rhythms—that when the choice of words remains unchanged and only the arrangement is altered, the rhythm and the metre is changed, and with it the structure, the complexion, the character, the feeling and the general effectiveness of the lines.')

¹⁵ Cf. Greenberg (1958), 264–5 and Janko (2000), 226–7. In his review of Janko's edition of Philodemus' *On Poems* 1, D. Sider, *BMCR* 2002.06.16, falsely attributes the metathesis of *Il.* 16.112–14 (*On Poems* 1.39 Janko) to Philodemus himself. Philodemus, however, objected that metathesis is impossible, because any change in the composition of a verse will also alter its meaning: see Janko (2000), 217 n. 7 and 227 n. 2.

¹⁶ Cf. M. van Raalte, *Rhythm and Metre, Towards a Systematic Description of Greek Stichic Verse* (Assen, 1986), 70–83 and C. M. J. Sicking, *Griechische Verslehre* (München, 1993), 75–8.

¹⁷ Cf. M. van Raalte (n. 16), 81–2.

Comparison of relevant passages from Philodemus' treatise shows that the device of metathesis has not been employed with full rigor by Dionysius, that metathesis was employed more often by ancient critics than might be supposed from Dionysius' account, and that these critics derived conclusions from the device which were more sweeping than those of Dionysius.¹⁸

We could wonder, however, whether such a conclusion, based on one instance of Dionysian metathesis, is justified. First, Greenberg pays no attention to Dionysius' many metatheses of prose, which fall outside the scope of his article.¹⁹ Second, he seems to ignore the fact that Dionysius' language experiments have a much wider application than those of the *kritikoi* who are discussed by Philodemus. I do not agree with Greenberg that the conclusions that the *kritikoi* derived from the method of metathesis were in general more 'sweeping' than those of Dionysius.²⁰ For, as I intend to point out, Dionysius' rearrangements have many more purposes than just to establish the general importance of composition. His method of metathesis is a versatile instrument, which he uses to point to specific merits, defects or particularities of classical texts, in order to teach his readers how to write convincingly.

III. THE VERSATILITY OF DIONYSIUS' METHOD OF METATHESIS

When discussing Dionysius' language experiments, it seems useful to distinguish between three categories of metatheses:²¹ first, the rewritings that claim to surpass the quality of the original text, by the correction of certain faults (III.1). Second, the rewritings that are inferior to the original, proving certain virtues of that original text (III.2). Third, the rewritings that are of equal value to the original text, illustrating alternative compositions that are neither better nor worse than the original (III.3). In this paper, I can only deal with a few examples of each category.

III.1 *Metatheses correcting faults of the original*

The majority of Dionysius' rearrangements belong to the first group: they bring out stylistic defects in the original. In his early works, Dionysius uses this first type of metathesis exclusively, and it remains the most common technique in his later

¹⁸ Greenberg (1958), 262. In fact, Dionysius nowhere says that other critics did *not* employ the method of metathesis. Besides, when Greenberg (1958), 265–6 states that 'Dionysius is demonstrating in effect the efficacy of the meter rather than the primacy of *synthesis*', he seems to forget that for Dionysius *σύνθεσις* is far more than word order alone, and that rhythm is in fact one of the many aspects that comprise the Dionysian concept of *σύνθεσις*. Dionysius does not say that he is discussing the importance of word order, but of *synthesis* in general. Therefore, it seems to me that his metathesis of the verses from *Iliad* 12 is not as unsatisfactory as Greenberg thinks.

¹⁹ Greenberg (1958), 265 n. 11 correctly states that 'Unlike poetic metathesis, not all prosaic metatheses are bad.' In other words, whereas the metathesis of a line of poetry is always presented as inferior to the original, the rewriting of a prose text can be presented as surpassing the original in quality. See my paragraph III.1.

²⁰ Greenberg (1958), 262.

²¹ Damon (1991), 51–2, who focuses on the evaluative aspect of the method, seems to make a distinction between only two groups: 'The majority (33) of the rewritten sentences point out stylistic faults in the original by providing simple, unambiguous and otherwise unobjectionable renderings of the same idea. Ten of the metatheses, however, are intended to show that by changing the word arrangement in a passage of good writing one can either produce a different style of equal acceptability, or destroy its effectiveness altogether.' It seems useful, however, to distinguish between the rewritings that are inferior to the original version on the one hand, and the rewritings that are of equal value on the other hand. Th. Hidber, *Das klassizistische Manifest des Dionys von Halikarnass, Die praefatio zu De oratoribus veteribus* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1996), 66 ignores the metatheses that provide alternatives of equal quality.

works, such as the second letter to Ammaeus, in which Dionysius illustrates his criticism of the style of Thucydides. In most cases, the rewritings of this type prove the artificiality and ‘unnaturalness’ of a certain passage: the original texts are criticized because they contain hyperbaton, anacolutha, obscure words, complex constructions, long-windedness, redundancy, periphrases, grammatical irregularities, unclear figures, or ‘theatrical’ parallelisms. Dionysius removes these defects and rewrites the passage in everyday language, or, as he says, in the style of ‘those who construct their sentences in conformity with generally recognised usage’.²²

In *Dem.* 18 and 19, for example, Dionysius intends to show that the style of Isocrates is not perfect, and contains serious deficiencies, in particular long-windedness by the use of repetitions, lack of compactness and the inappropriate use of soft-sounding words (*Dem.* 18.166.5–8). The way in which Dionysius introduces his metathesis of a passage from Isocrates’ *On the Peace* is characteristic of his application of the rewriting method, in that he explicitly involves the reader in his analysis:

4. *Dion. Hal. Dem.* 19.167.14–17:

εἰ δὲ ὀρθῶς ἐπιλογίζομαι ταῦτ’ ἐγὼ καὶ ἔστιν ἐν ταύταις ταῖς ἀρεταῖς ἐνδεέστερος ὁ ἀνὴρ, πάρεστι τῷ βουλομένῳ σκοπεῖν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρτίως παραθεθείσης λέξεως ποιουμένων τὴν ἐξέτασιν. Whether my argument is sound and Isocrates is inferior in these qualities, any reader can judge for himself by examining the passage which I have just quoted.

Dionysius then rewrites a sentence of Isocrates’ *On the Peace*, ‘making one period out of two’: he simplifies the original, in order to make it ‘more compact’ (*συντομωτέραν*) and ‘more elegant’ (*χαριεστέραν*).²³

5. *Dion. Hal. Dem.* 19.167.14–168.12:

Isocrates, *On the Peace* 41:

Τίς γὰρ ἂν ἄλλοθεν ἐπελθὼν καὶ μὴ συνδιεφθαρμένος ἡμῖν ἀλλ’ ἐξαίφνης ἐπιστὰς τοῖς γιγνομένοις οὐκ ἂν μαίνεσθαι καὶ παραφρονεῖν ἡμᾶς νομίσαιεν; οἱ φιλοτιμούμεθα μὲν ἐπὶ τοῖς τῶν προγόνων ἔργοις καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἐκ τῶν τότε πραχθέντων ἐγκωμιάζειν ἀξιούμεν, οὐδὲν δὲ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐκείνοις πράττομεν ἀλλὰ πᾶν τοῦναντίον.

What stranger, coming from abroad and suddenly finding himself embroiled in our affairs before having the time to become corrupted by our depravity, would not think us insane and beside ourselves, when we glory in the deeds of our ancestors, and think it right to sing the city’s praises by recounting the achievements of their day, and yet act in no way like them but do exactly the opposite?

Dion. Hal.’s metathesis:

τίς γὰρ ἂν ἄλλοθεν ἐπελθὼν οὐκ ἂν μαίνεσθαι νομίσαιεν ἡμᾶς, οἱ φιλοτιμούμεθα μὲν ἐπὶ τοῖς τῶν προγόνων ἔργοις, οὐδὲν δὲ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐκείνοις πράττομεν;

What stranger from abroad would not think us insane, when we glory in the deeds of our ancestors, but act in no way like them?

²² *Amm.* 2.11.430.18 20. Cf. Damon (1991), 52.

²³ On this passage, see also Bonner (1939), 69–70.

In this case, Dionysius has merely shortened the original passage, leaving out all repetitions and ornaments. All amplifications in Isocrates' sentence, three of which start with *καί* (namely *καί μή... γιγνομένοις, καί παραφρονεῖν* and *καί τὴν πόλιν... ἀξιοῦμεν*), one with *ἀλλά* (namely *ἀλλὰ πᾶν τοῦναντίον*), have been removed. He has, however, also changed the word order of *ἡμᾶς νομίσειεν* into *νομίσειεν ἡμᾶς*, probably in order to avoid the ugly hiatus of *μαίνεσθαι ἡμᾶς*. In the subsequent passage, Dionysius goes on rewriting Isocrates, not only shortening the original, but also changing certain words and simplifying periphrastic formulas. Thus in *On the Peace* 42 he rewrites *τὰς πόλεις τὰς Ἑλληνίδας* (the Greek cities) as *τὴν Ἑλλάδα* (Greece) and in *On the Peace* 43 he changes *τῶν κατ' ἐκείνον τὸν χρόνον γενομένων* (the men who lived in that time) into *τῶν προγόνων* (our ancestors):

6. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 19.168.12–169.11:

Isocrates, *On the Peace* 42:

καὶ κείνοι μὲν ἐλευθεροῦντες τὰς πόλεις τὰς Ἑλληνίδας καὶ βοηθοῦντες αὐταῖς τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἡξιώθησαν, ἡμεῖς δὲ [καὶ] καταδουλούμενοι καὶ τᾶναντία τοῖς τότε πράττοντες ἀγανακτοῦμεν, εἰ μὴ τὴν αὐτὴν τιμὴν ἐκείνοις ἔξομεν.

They liberated the cities of Greece and came to their aid, and so earned the right to be their leaders, while we try to enslave them, doing the opposite of what they did at that time, and then feel aggrieved when we are not honoured as they were.

Isocrates, *On the Peace* 43:

οἱ τοσοῦτον ἀπολελείμμεθα καὶ ταῖς διανοαῖς καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν κατ' ἐκείνων τὸν χρόνον γενομένων, ὅσον οἱ μὲν ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐλευθερίας τὴν τε πατρίδα τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἐκλιπεῖν ἐτόλμησαν καὶ μαχόμενοι καὶ ναυμαχοῦντες τοὺς βαρβάρους ἐνίκησαν,

We who fall so far short of the men of those times in both our deeds and our aspirations that, whereas they had the courage to leave their country in order to save Greece, and fighting on both land and sea conquered the barbarians, ...

Dion. Hal.'s metathesis:

καὶ κείνοι μὲν ἐλευθεροῦντες τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ σώζοντες ἐπὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν προήλθον, ἡμεῖς δὲ καταδουλούμενοι καὶ διολλύντες ἀγανακτοῦμεν, εἰ μὴ τῶν ἴσων τευξόμεθα.

They attained to the leadership of Greece by freeing her and saving her, while we, who are trying to enslave and destroy her, are aggrieved that we are not to be accorded equal honour.

Dion. Hal.'s metathesis:

οἱ τοσοῦτω χείρους ἐσμέν τῶν προγόνων, ὅσον οἱ μὲν ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώσαι τοὺς Ἕλληνας τὴν τε πατρίδα τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἐξέλιπον καὶ μαχόμενοι πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους ἐνίκησαν,

We who are so much worse than our ancestors that, whereas they, in order to save the Greeks, abandoned their country, and fighting the barbarians conquered them, ...

Dionysius seems to object in particular to rhetorical pleonasms; so he interprets the expression *τᾶναντία τοῖς τότε πράττοντες* (doing the opposite of what they did at that time) as *διολλύντες* (destroying), thus clarifying the antithesis with *βοηθοῦντες* (or *σώζοντες*, which he uses instead of *βοηθοῦντες*, possibly in order to avoid assonance of *βοηθοῦντες* with *ἐλευθεροῦντες*). He also changes *μαχόμενοι καὶ ναυμαχοῦντες* (fighting on both land and sea) into the simple *μαχόμενοι* (fighting). Besides, Dionysius rewrites some of Isocrates' synthetic expressions in an analytical way, which seems to be characteristic of later Greek. So he resolves the verb

ἡξιώθησαν into a preposition and a verb, namely ἐπὶ . . . προῆλθον, and he changes the perfect ἀπολελείμεθα into χείρους ἐσμέν, leaving out the pleonastic καὶ ταῖς διανοαῖς καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις (in both our deeds and our aspirations).²⁴ Dionysius also changes the arrangement of clauses: in his version, πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους belongs to μαχόμενοι, whereas Isocrates' τοὺς βαρβάρους is the object of ἐνίκησαν. This change is probably suggested by the disappearance of καὶ ναυμαχοῦντες. In many cases we may disagree with Dionysius, for his changes do not preserve the exact meaning of the original. 'The cities of Greece', for example, are not identical with 'Greece', and Isocrates' addition of ναυμαχοῦντες ('even on the sea') is surely not a useless one.

A constant theme in Dionysius' discussions of the passages that he tries to correct is the idea that one should avoid obscurity. Lucidity (σαφήνεια) and the use of standard, ordinary words (κύρια ὀνόματα) are qualities that Dionysius holds in constant regard, from his early essays (especially *On Lysias*) onwards (*Lys.* 2–4). The view that poetical language and periphrasis should be avoided seems to be central to the metatheses of the first type. Apart from Isocrates, Thucydides is an important target for Dionysius' criticism of obscure language. In his treatise *On Thucydides*, he constantly criticizes the style of Thucydides, some of whose passages 'cannot be understood without a linguistic commentary' (Thuc. 51.410.15–17). Dionysius illustrates his remarks by offering a clearer version of Thuc. 3.82, removing strange words, periphrases, and figures of speech, 'which have the appearance of solecisms' (Thuc. 28–33). Similar objections to Thucydides' style are found in Dionysius' second letter to Ammaeus, where he focuses on grammatical irregularities in the use of the parts of speech, gender, cases, tenses, voice and number (*Amm.* 2.8–15). Again, the rewriting of several passages from Thucydides serves to illustrate the ways in which one could avoid obscurity and artificiality.

III.2 Metatheses bringing out virtues of the original

The second type of metathesis, which is intended to bring out the virtues of an original text, is only found in *De Compositione Verborum*.²⁵ We have already observed that the purpose of Dionysius' rewriting of the lines from *Iliad* 12 and 13 in *Comp.* 4 (texts 1 and 2 above) was to prove that composition in general is more important than the selection of words. Apart from establishing the primacy of σύνθεσις in general, however, the second type of metathesis can also point to particular virtues of certain texts. The virtues that Dionysius analyses in this way are (i) the euphonic effects of certain letters or combinations of letters, (ii) the effects of certain rhythms, and (iii) the proper arrangement and length of certain clauses. I will give one example of each of these subtypes.

In text 7, Dionysius shows that the addition of one letter can make a composition more charming (or, rather, that the omission of one letter can make it less euphonic). Here, as in text 8 below, Dionysius presents his own metathesis as the standard version, from which the original text deviates. At the beginning of his *De Corona*, Demosthenes has written τουτουὶ τὸν ἀγῶνα instead of τοῦτον τὸν ἀγῶνα, which would be the standard expression.

²⁴ Cf. C. M. J. Sicking and P. Stork, *Two Studies in the Semantics of the Verb in Classical Greek* (Leiden, New York and Köln, 1996), 121 on the disappearance of the synthetic perfect in later Greek.

²⁵ Bonner (1939), 76–7 remarks that in *Comp.* 'the method of recasting is used in a novel and most convincing manner'.

7. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 6.29.19–30.1:

Demosthenes, *De Corona* 1:
 εἰς τουτονὶ τὸν ἀγῶνα
 to the trial here

Dion. Hal.'s metathesis:
 εἰς τοῦτον τὸν ἀγῶνα
 to this trial

Although Dionysius does not explain why Demosthenes' version is more harmonious than his metathesis, we can easily supply his argument from other chapters of *De Compositione*: according to Dionysius, the combination of the semivowel (ἡμίφωνον) ν and the voiceless (ἄφωνον) τ produces a dissonant effect.²⁶ Therefore, the addition of the ι, between the ν and the τ, has made the composition more euphonious.²⁷

In text 9, Dionysius shows that, in a chapter of his speech *Against Leptines*, Demosthenes has made his composition charming, by paying more attention to the rhythmical quality (εὐρυθμία) than to the explicitness (ἀκριβεία) of his clauses:

8. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 9.35.7–16:

Demosthenes, *Against Leptines* 2:
 ἐγὼ δ' ὅτι μὲν τινῶν κατηγοροῦντα πάντας
 ἀφαιρεῖσθαι τὴν ἀτέλειαν τῶν ἀδίκων
 ἐστίν, ἔασω.

As for me, the fact that it is a case of
 injustice that, when someone is accusing
 certain individuals, he tries to deprive all
 of exemption, I shall pass over.

Dion. Hal.'s metathesis:
 ἐγὼ δ' ὅτι μὲν τινῶν κατηγοροῦντα ὡς οὐκ
 ἐπιτηδείων ἔχειν τὴν ἀτέλειαν πάντας
 ἀφαιρεῖσθαι καὶ τοὺς δικαίως αὐτῆς
 τυχόντας τῶν ἀδίκων ἐστίν, ἔασω.

As for me, the fact that it is a case of
 injustice that, when someone is accusing
 certain individuals of being unfit for
 exemption, he tries to deprive all of
 exemption, even those who receive it by
 right, I shall pass over.

Although Dionysius tells us that the rhythm makes the original text preferable to the rewritten version, he is not explicit about the precise character of that rhythm. It is interesting, however, that he describes his own metathesis as the αὐτοτελή (complete, self-sufficient) version: here we have his recurring idea of a basic, natural form of language, in which each sentence is complete in itself.²⁸ Authors can deviate from this basic form by shortening or expanding their clauses. The term αὐτοτελής

²⁶ Cf. *Comp.* 22.104.14 105.13 where Dionysius discusses the dissonance of the combinations ν θ and ν τ in Pindar's ὀμφαλὸν θυόεντα and πανδαίδαλὸν τ'εὐκλε' ἀγοράν with regard to the latter case, Dionysius actually says that the removal of the τ (which would also involve a change of metre) would make the composition more euphonious. See J. Vaahtera, 'Phonetics and euphony in Dionysius of Halicarnassus', *Mnemos.* 50 (1997), 586–95 at 593, where all the combinations of a ἡμίφωνον and an ἄφωνον in the texts discussed by Dionysius are counted. According to Vaahtera, the texts of Isocrates that are quoted by Dionysius contain forty-one combinations of words ending on ν and words beginning with τ, which is far more than the passages by other authors. Isocrates, however, belongs to the smooth composition type, so in fact he should have fewest of these combinations. This fact seems to support Vaahtera's conclusion that Dionysius' theory is not fully consistent with the reality of the texts that he used.

²⁷ Dionysius may also object to the stamping repetition 'TON TON'.

²⁸ On Dionysius' views on natural configuration of language, see D. M. Schenkeveld, 'Linguistic theories in the rhetorical works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus', *Glotta* 61 (1983), 90–2; C. C. de Jonge, 'Natura artis magistra: ancient rhetoricians, grammarians and philosophers on natural word order', in T. van der Wouden and H. Broekhuis (edd.), *Linguistics in the*

(having its own τέλος, *ending*) points to the idea that a clause embraces a complete thought and is, therefore, independent.²⁹ Thus, Dionysius assumes that we can isolate a basic, grammatically complete sense-structure, on which supplements can be added or from which items can be removed. The remarkable consequence of this view is that Dionysius describes Demosthenes' original sentence as the *adaptation* of his own version: according to Dionysius, the two first clauses have been 'shortened' (μεμείωται) by Demosthenes. This kind of what we would regard as turning things around appears in many of his discussions of metathesis; Dionysius often presents his own rearrangement as the natural or standard text version, from which the original text deviates.

In text 9, Dionysius' metathesis of a sentence from Thucydides proves the importance of the proper arrangement of clauses:³⁰

9. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 7.31.5–17:

Thuc. 3.57.4: ὕμεις τε ὦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι ἡ μόνη ἐλπίς, δέδιμεν, μὴ οὐ βέβαιοι ᾗτε. And we fear, men of Sparta, lest you, our only hope, may fail in resolution.	Dion. Hal.'s metathesis: ὕμεις τε, ὦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, δέδιμεν μὴ οὐ βέβαιοι ᾗτε, ἡ μόνη ἐλπίς. And we fear, men of Sparta, lest you may fail in resolution, that are our only hope.
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In the metathesis of this passage from the speech of the Plataeans, the shift of the words ἡ μόνη ἐλπίς removes the charm (χάρις) and feeling (πάθος) of the original.³¹ We could add that Dionysius' change does not make the sentence more understandable.³²

As has been pointed out by Damon, Dionysius is less explicit about the precise nature of the virtues that his metatheses prove than about the defects that he corrects.³³ I think that there are at least two explanations for this habit: on the one hand, we may point to the didactic nature of Dionysius' literary analysis; on the other hand, we should take into account Dionysius' views on the so-called ἄλογος αἴσθησις, the instinctive feeling that enables any person to appreciate and judge a work of art.³⁴

Netherlands, AVT Publications 18 (2001), 159–66. The idea of a natural, basic form of language is probably influenced by Stoic philosophy.

²⁹ On the idea that a colon indicates the conclusion of a thought, see Pseudo Demetrius, *Eloc.* 2, with the remarks by D. M. Schenkeveld, *Studies in Demetrius On Style* (Amsterdam, 1964), 23–5, and D. C. Innes, 'Period and colon: theory and example in Demetrius and Longinus', in W. W. Fortenbaugh and D. C. Mirhady (edd.), *Peripatetic Rhetoric after Aristotle*, *Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities* 6 (New Brunswick, 1994), 36–53. The word αὐτοτελής διάνοια, 'a complete, independent thought', which is the closest definition of a sentence in ancient linguistics: see D. M. Schenkeveld, 'Language', in K. Algra, J. Barnes, J. Mansfeld, and M. Schofield (edd.), *Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1999), 177–225 at 184.

³⁰ On this case of metathesis, see also Bonner (1939), 76.

³¹ The original is 'a very felicitously (χαριέντως) composed sentence, full of feeling (μεστή πάθους)'.

³² Dionysius may be thinking that 'you who are our only hope' is logically last as providing the cause of the fear: Pseudo-Longinus 22.2 discusses a hyperbaton in Herodotus 6.11, where the historian is said to have inverted the natural order of words by putting the reason (αἰτία) in the first place.

³³ Damon (1991), 52: '[A]ll Dionysius does is label the various stylistic characters, never putting his finger on that wherein the character lies. ... Metathesis, then, though an eminently satisfactory means of locating a passage's faults, is not used by Dionysius to explain its virtues in any but the most general terms.'

³⁴ On the theory of the ἄλογος αἴσθησις, see the literature cited in n. 42.

First, we should consider the didactic character of Dionysius' work *On Composition*, to which the instances of the second type of metathesis are confined. It is true that in all his treatises, literary criticism is subservient to the actual production of texts: in that sense, all his critical works have an educational purpose. However, the treatise *On Composition* is in particular characterized by a didactic approach. In this work, Dionysius intends to teach his pupil Rufus Metilius, and other young boys who are beginning to take up the study of civil oratory, the art of composition (*Comp.* 1.4.3–5). The person of the addressee and the intended audience in general clearly involve a specific presentation of Dionysius' ideas. This might explain why he uses the second type of metathesis (bringing out virtues of the original text) only in *De Compositione Verborum*, and not in the works dedicated to his friends and colleagues.³⁵ It may be significant that the methodological treatise of Pseudo-Demetrius *On Style*, which clearly has a didactic character, applies the technique of illustrating the quality (rather than the faults) of a text very frequently: this type of metathesis is apparently more appropriate to a practical handbook for students than to literary treatises dedicated to competent 'scholars'.³⁶ The intended audience of *On Composition* might also explain the fact that Dionysius is not always explicit on the virtues that his metatheses bring out: instead of analysing the exact causes of the supreme quality of the original text that he rewrites, Dionysius often invites his readers (or pupils) to draw their own conclusions on the basis of his metathesis. He asks, for example: 'Would the sentence have been composed with the same elegance as in the form in which it was actually written?' (*Comp.* 8.32.21–2). Such repeated didactic questions are absent from the treatises that are addressed to Ammaeus, Pompeius Geminus, and Quintus Aelius Tubero, where Dionysius seems to have in mind an audience of scholars rather than pupils.³⁷ The didactic aspect of the rewriting technique in *On Composition* is also indicated by the cases in which Dionysius does not carry out the metathesis, but leaves it to the reader. In *Comp.* 3, for example, Dionysius invites the reader to put the method of metathesis into practice, if he wants to see that the quality of Herodotus' 'Gyges and Kandaules' story is not due to the selection of words, but to the composition:

10. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 3.14.16–18:

οὔτι δὲ οὐδὲν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐστὶ σεμνὸν οὐδὲ περιττόν, ὁ βουλόμενος εἴσεται μεταθεῖς οὐδὲν ὅ τι μὴ τὴν ἁρμονίαν.

That there is no grand or striking word in the present passage, anyone who wishes may discover by changing nothing but the arrangement.

Evidently, Dionysius supposes that his readers are used to the technique of rewriting texts, and he is even confident that they can employ the method of metathesis themselves.³⁸ We can explain this by pointing to the importance of the *paraphrases* in the 'preliminary training exercises' (*progymnasmata*) that were part of the educational

³⁵ On the addressees of Dionysius' rhetorical works, see W. Rhys Roberts, 'The literary circle of Dionysius of Halicarnassus', *CR* 14 (1900), 439–42, and Bonner (1939), 3–6.

³⁶ On the didactic nature of Demetrius *On Style*, cf. D.M. Schenkeveld, *Studies in Demetrius On Style* (Amsterdam, 1964), 22. For the use of metathesis in that work, see Damon (1991), 52 n. 100.

³⁷ See e.g. *Thuc.* 25.364.10–11, where Dionysius addresses Tubero and 'other scholars' (*φιλόλογων*) who should happen to read this treatise. Likewise, the treatise *On Demosthenes* was primarily intended for an audience of competent readers who already knew the orator's work: cf. *Dem.* 46.231.22–4.

³⁸ A similar procedure can be found in Pseudo-Longinus 40.2–3, where it is said that a metathesis of Eur. *HF* 1245 (a verse consisting of simple words), would prove that 'Euripides is a poet of word arrangement more than of ideas'.

system of Dionysius' time.³⁹ In his treatise on *progymnasmata*, Theon defines paraphrase as 'changing the form of expression while keeping the thoughts'.⁴⁰ He distinguishes four main kinds of *paraphrasis*, namely variation in syntax, by addition, by subtraction and by substitution. Dionysius' readers were certainly used to the rewriting of texts because of their daily exercises at school. Therefore, he can assume that his audience is familiar with his technique of metathesis.⁴¹

However, the didactic character of his works does not offer the complete explanation for the fact that Dionysius is almost never explicit about the virtues of the texts that his metatheses prove. The second aspect that has to be taken into account here is the irrational, instinctive criterion (τὸ ἄλογον τῆς διανοίας κριτήριον), which is, besides the rational criterion (τὸ λογικὸν κριτήριον), one of the two faculties by which literature is judged.⁴² According to Dionysius, everyone has an instinctive feeling (ἄλογος αἴσθησις), on which one can rely to judge literature. It seems that Dionysius therefore supposes that the virtues that his metatheses prove are self-evident and do not need a lengthy explanation. In many cases, the rearrangement is directly followed by a rhetorical question, in which Dionysius makes it clear that he expects everyone to agree with him that the original text is better than his own version: 'When the clauses are arranged in this way, does the same charm still remain, or the same feeling? No one would say so' (*Comp.* 7.31.16–17).

III.3 Metatheses illustrating alternative compositions or showing certain particularities

The third type of metathesis produces a text that is neither preferable nor inferior to the original, but offers an alternative that can exist beside the original. This type is only found in Dionysius' later writings. This may be explained by the fact that in *De Compositione Verborum* and *De Demosthene* Dionysius develops a theory of different valid composition types (συνθέσεις or ἁρμονίαι), whereas in his earlier works he uses a theory of antithetical good and bad qualities (ἀρεταί), which sharply distinguish good and bad versions of a text. The metathesis illustrating alternative compositions seems to be a more original approach than the other two types of rewriting, which I have dealt with before. The use of this metathesis also corresponds to the more aesthetic approach and the generally more detailed analysis that set Dionysius' later works apart from his earlier writings. Within the third type of metathesis, we can distinguish between three subtypes: (i) conversions of the Ionic

³⁹ The *progymnasmata* fell under the teaching of the *rhetor*, but some elementary exercises were already taught by the *grammaticus*. On these preliminary exercises, and the *paraphrasis* in particular, see Quint. 1.9.2 and Theon 2.62.10ff. Cf. H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris, 1965⁶), 259–64 and 410–11; S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome, From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (London and Cambridge, 1977), 250–76; T. Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge, 1998), 198–226; G. A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition: Introductory to the Study of Rhetoric* (Fort Collins, 2000); J. J. Murphy, 'Grammar and rhetoric in Roman schools', in S. Auroux, E. F. K. Koerner, H.-J. Niederehe, and K. Versteegh (edd.), *History of the Language Sciences, Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaften, Histoire des sciences du langage* 1 (Berlin and New York, 2000), 484–92.

⁴⁰ Kennedy (n. 39), 51–2.

⁴¹ Similarly, the grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus supposes that his audience is familiar with his method of μεταλήψις (paraphrasing): see Sluiter (n. 7), 111–17.

⁴² See *Thuc.* 27.371.5–10. Cf. D. M. Schenkeveld, 'Theories of evaluation in the rhetorical works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus', *MPhL* 1 (1975), 93–107; Goudriaan (n. 9), 142–54; Damon (1991), 44–5.

dialect, (ii) metatheses pointing out differences between various styles of composition, and (iii) metatheses illustrating the poetical character of clauses in a prose text.

First, we can place in this category those cases where Dionysius changes the Ionic of Herodotus into the Attic dialect. According to Usher, Dionysius was forced to do this, because in the Ionic dialect Herodotus could never be a satisfactory model.⁴³ However, there seems to be a second reason why Dionysius converts the dialect of Herodotus. In *Comp.* 3, Dionysius quotes the famous story of 'Gyges and Candaules' in the Attic dialect.⁴⁴ As he explains himself, Dionysius changes the Ionic into Attic in order that 'no one may imagine that the passage owes its attractiveness to the dialect' (*Comp.* 3.12.18–13.2). In other words, Dionysius wants us to believe that the charm of the story is due to the composition, and not to the Ionic dialect. Therefore, he has to show that the passage preserves its pleasing form when rewritten in the Attic dialect. It remains remarkable, however, that it does not seem to bother Dionysius that, together with the dialect, he also changes the sounds of the original text, in spite of the fact that euphony is such an important aspect of *σύνθεσις*.

In a few cases, Dionysius rewrites a passage in order to show the differences between various composition styles.⁴⁵ The most interesting example of this subtype is his dual metathesis of Herodotus 1.6 in *Comp.* 4. The first rearrangement is in the style of Thucydides, the second is that of Hegesias, the archetype of Asiatic perversity:

11. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 4.18.4–19.18:

Herodotus 1.6:

Κροῖσος ἦν Λυδὸς μὲν
γένος, παῖς δ' Ἀλυάττου,
τύραννος δ' ἑθνῶν τῶν ἐντὸς
Ἄλως ποταμοῦ· ὃς ῥέων
ἀπὸ μεσημβρίας μεταξὺ
Σύρων τε καὶ Παφλαγόνων
ἐξίησι πρὸς βορέαν ἄνεμον
εἰς τὸν Εὐξείνιον καλούμενον
πόντον.

Dion. Hal.'s first metathesis:

the style of Thucydides:

Κροῖσος ἦν υἱὸς μὲν
Ἀλυάττου, γένος δὲ Λυδός,
τύραννος δὲ τῶν ἐντὸς
Ἄλως ποταμοῦ ἑθνῶν· ὃς
ἀπὸ μεσημβρίας ῥέων
μεταξὺ Σύρων καὶ
Παφλαγόνων εἰς τὸν
Εὐξείνιον καλούμενον
πόντον ἐκδίδωσι πρὸς
βορέαν ἄνεμον.

Dion. Hal.'s second metathesis:

the style of Hegesias:

Ἀλυάττου μὲν υἱὸς ἦν
Κροῖσος, γένος δὲ Λυδός,
τῶν δ' ἐντὸς Ἄλως ποταμοῦ
τύραννος ἑθνῶν· ὃς ἀπὸ
μεσημβρίας ῥέων Σύρων
τε καὶ Παφλαγόνων μεταξὺ
πρὸς βορέαν ἐξίησιν ἄνεμον
εἰς τὸν καλούμενον πόντον
Εὐξείνιον.

⁴³ Usher (1974), 398 9 n. 1 (on the rewriting of Hdt. 7.8 in *Dem.* 41.220.23–223.4): 'Herodotus was something of an embarrassment to Dionysius'. Dionysius did not have the same problem with Homer, because Homer was considered the model of all dialects, including Attic: see Pseudo Plutarch, *De Homero* 8 13. According to the author of this treatise, Homer μάλιστα δὲ τῇ Ἀτθίδι διαλέκτῳ κέχρηται (*De Homero* 12). Cf. M. Hillgruber, *Die pseudophlutarische Schrift De Homero* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1994), 114ff. For writing prose, Attic was the model, but for poetry the dialect depended on genre requirements. Therefore, Dionysius quotes not only Homer, but also Sappho and Pindar in their own dialect.

⁴⁴ On the many different rewritings of the story of 'Gyges and Candaules' in the rhetorical tradition, see Spina (n. 6 1999).

⁴⁵ Apart from the metathesis of Herodotus 1.6 in *Comp.* 4 (below), there is the rewriting of a verse by Pindar in *Comp.* 22.105.2 13, which illustrates the difference between the austere and the smooth composition type by removing the dissonant combination -ν τ- (cf. n. 26). Pseudo-Demetrius 296 8 uses this type of metathesis to illustrate the differences between styles that are specific to individual authors, such as Aristippus, Xenophon, Aeschines, and Plato.

Croesus was a Lydian by birth and the son of Alyattes. He was king of the nations on this side of the river Halys, which flows from the south between Syria and Paphlagonia and discharges itself into the sea to the north, which is called the Euxine.	Croesus was the son of Alyattes, and by birth a Lydian. He was king, on this side of the Halys, over nations; which river from the south flowing between Syria and Paphlagonia runs into the sea which is called the Euxine and issues towards the north.	Alyattes' son was Croesus, by birth a Lydian. King over all nations was he, on this side of the river Halys; which river from the south flowing between Syria and Paphlagonia discharges itself to the north, into the Euxine-called sea.
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Dionysius describes the original version as 'leisurely' (ὑπαγωγικόν) and 'history-like' (ἱστορικόν), the second as 'straightforward' or 'systematic' (ὀρθόν) and 'forensic' (ἐναγώνιον). The third version, in the style of Hegesias, is 'precious' (μικρόκομψον), 'degenerate' (ἀγεννές) and 'effeminate' (μαλθακόν). There is much to say on these rewritings, but I can here only briefly comment on some aspects. The reason why the Thucydidean version is described as ὀρθόν is probably that it has a more systematic way of distributing its information than the original. In 'outward expansion', Thucydides' first deals with Croesus' family, then his Lydian birth, and finally his kingship; likewise, the relative clause flows together with the river Halys, beginning in the south (ἀπὸ μεσημβρίας) and ending in the north (πρὸς βορέαν ἄνεμον). Dionysius has also altered some words.⁴⁶ For example, he has observed that παῖς is more common in Herodotus, whereas Thucydides and Hegesias would rather use υἱός.⁴⁷ In the composition of this version, I think that we can observe some characteristics of the austere σύνθεσις, the composition type to which Thucydides belongs, according to Dionysius.⁴⁸ The displacement of Λυδός breaks the parallelism between Λυδός, παῖς (υἱός), and τύραννος, and creates *anastrophe*. In the Thucydidean version, there are also more clashes of consonants and semivowels at word boundaries, such as μεσημβρίας ῥέων and ῥέων μεταξύ. Next, the postponement of ἐθνῶν creates a hiatus between ποταμοῦ and ἐθνῶν. Hiatus and clashes of consonants or semivowels are typical of the austere composition as Dionysius conceives it.⁴⁹ Further, instead of eight, there are now twelve words between the relative pronoun ὃς and the verb ἐκδίδωσι (ἐξίησι), a hyperbaton which also appears to suit the σύνθεσις αὐστηρά.⁵⁰ Finally, the removal of the word τε from τε καί might be explained by

⁴⁶ In fact, Dionysius had said that he would not change the words, but only their order: μενόντων μὲν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀλλαττομένης δὲ τῆς συνθέσεως (*Comp.* 4.18.5–6).

⁴⁷ See LSJ s.v. υἱός. The change of παῖς into υἱός may also be explained by the fact that the latter word is more familiar in later Greek: Pseudo Demetrius 11 (on period theory) makes the same change in his metathesis of Demosthenes, *Lept.* 1.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Comp.* 22.98.11 and 22.106.15–111.17. On the three composition types (σύνθεσις αὐστηρά, γλαφυρά and εὐκρατος or κοινή), which should not be confused with the three 'styles', see K. Pohl, *Die Lehre von den drei Wortfügungsarten, Untersuchungen zu Dionysios von Halikarnaß, De compositione verborum* (Tübingen, 1968) and F. Donadi, 'Il «bello» e il «piacere» (osservazioni sul *De compositione verborum* di Dionigi d'Alicarnasso)', *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 4 (1986), 42–63.

⁴⁹ *Dem.* 38.210.14ff. and *Comp.* 22.96.13–14: 'the parts of the sentence shall be at considerable distances from one another, separated by perceptible intervals'.

⁵⁰ The austere composition is in many cases ὑπεροπτική τῆς ἀκολουθίας ('neglecting grammatical sequence'): *Comp.* 22.98.2–3.

the fact that the austere composition contains fewer σύνδεσμοι than the smooth composition.⁵¹

Unfortunately, Dionysius does not tell us why the austere composition is ὀλιγοσύνδεσμος (containing few connectives), but we can think of two explanations. Either Dionysius' idea may be that σύνδεσμοι are sometimes used to avoid hiatus, whereas hiatus is characteristic of the austere composition. Or he may reason that connectives can make the structure of a text more explicit, whereas the austere composition should aim to 'emphasize its unstudied and simple character', without 'using any additional words which contribute nothing to the sense'.⁵² This second explanation may be related to Aristotle's view that asyndeton is appropriate to the λέξεις ἀγωνιστική (that is, the style of an oral speech), whereas it should be absent from the λέξεις γραφική (the style of a written composition) (*Rhet.* 1413b3–1414a28). According to Aristotle, asyndeton creates amplification (αὔξησις), 'because many things seem to be said at the same time', whereas the use of connectives makes 'many things seem one'. Although the removal of τε from τε καί in the first metathesis of Herodotus 1.6 does, of course, not produce asyndeton, Dionysius may have been guided by the idea that his austere composition, just like Aristotle's λέξεις ἀγωνιστική, avoids the use of many connectives. And we may notice that Aristotle's views on the use of asyndeton in the 'agonistic' style fit well into Dionysius' description of the Thucydidean version as 'forensic' (ἐναγώνιον).

Dionysius' second metathesis of Herodotus 1.6 is a clear example of a defective style, which pays no attention to the systematic distribution of information.⁵³ The opening with the genitive Ἀλυάττου is strange, the position of μέν after Ἀλυάττου puts the reader on the wrong track, the word τύραννος is concealed at an unnatural place, and the congruent pair βορέαν and ἄνεμον have been separated. This metathesis is associated with the 'Asiatic' style, to which the Atticist Dionysius strongly objects.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *Comp.* 22.98.1–2; cf. *Dem.* 29.213.6ff. In Dionysius' works, the word class σύνδεσμος includes not only connectives, but also prepositions like ἐπί and ἐν: see Schenkeveld (n. 28), 74.

⁵² *Comp.* 22.97.11–18. Cf. I. Sluiter, 'Parapleromatic lucubrations', in A. Rijksbaron (ed.), *New Approaches to Greek Particles* (Amsterdam 1997), 233–46 at 240–1. It may be interesting to note that, according to S. Usher, 'The style of Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the "Antiquitates Romanae"', *ANRW* Principat Band 30.1 (Berlin and New York, 1982), 817–38 at 829–30, Dionysius himself has a 'great partiality' for the particle τε, which Usher explains as an aspect of his archaizing tendency.

⁵³ One could argue that this second metathesis, being inferior to the original, should be treated under the second category (metatheses bringing out virtues of the original). The Thucydidean metathesis, however, is not presented as inferior to the original. Dionysius' purpose in this passage is to show the various ways in which one idea can be expressed, rather than to prove the quality of Herodotus' version. I have therefore chosen to deal with both the Thucydidean and the Asiatic metathesis in the third category (metatheses illustrating alternative compositions).

⁵⁴ On Hegesias and his alleged corrupt style, see S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire. Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World A.D. 50–250* (Oxford, 1996), 22. A third metathesis of Herodotus 1.6 can be found in Hermogenes, *On Types of Style* 1.3 (p. 203 Rabe). According to Hermogenes, Herodotus' original sentence is a model of purity (καθαρότης), which would be lost if the sentence started with a genitive absolute subordinate construction: Κροίσου ὄντος Λυδοῦ μὲν γένος, παιδὸς δὲ Ἀλυάττεω, τυράννου δὲ ἐθνῶν τῶν ἐντὸς Ἄλλου ποταμοῦ. . .: 'Since Croesus was a Lydian by birth, and since he was the son of Alyattes, and since he ruled those nations on this side of the Halys River.' (trans. C. W. Wooten, *Hermogenes' On Types of Style* [Chapel Hill and London, 1987]). Pseudo Demetrius 45–6 rewrites a comparable sentence from Thucydides 2.102, in which the course of the river Achelous is described.

There remains one sub-type of metathesis to be discussed, namely the rewriting of passages from prose texts in order to illustrate their poetical character. We find these rewritings in the twenty-fifth chapter of *De Compositione Verborum*, which deals with the question how prose can be made to resemble poetry.⁵⁵ By adding one or two words to a certain clause of Demosthenes, Dionysius shows that this clause almost corresponds to a trimeter, tetrameter or pentameter. In texts 12 and 13, Dionysius completes two iambic trimeters by adding *τινα* to the first, and *ἐν μέρει* to the second clause:

12. Dion. Hal., *Comp.* 25.128.14–18:

Demosthenes, <i>Against Aristocrates</i> 1: <i>προάγειν ἑμαυτὸν εἰς ἀπέχθειαν</i> expose myself to his hostility	Dion. Hal.'s metathesis: <i>προάγειν ἑμαυτὸν εἰς ἀπέχθειάν τινα</i> expose myself to some hostility of his
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13. Dion. Hal., *Comp.* 25.129.16–20:

Demosthenes, <i>Against Aristocrates</i> 1: <i>ἀποστερηθῆναι πάλιν αὐτῆς</i> and once again be taken from you	Dion. Hal.'s metathesis: <i>ἀποστερηθῆναι πάλιν αὐτῆς ἐν μέρει</i> and once again be taken from you in return
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We should not assume, of course, that Dionysius really suggests changing the original texts in these cases. Rather, he intends to prove that, in many cases, Demosthenes' prose texts resemble poetry. His writings are not actually 'in rhythm' (*ῥυθμιον*) or 'in metre' (*μέτρον*), but they *appear* rhythmical (*ῥυθμιον*) and metrical (*μέτρον*), which is to be preferred (*Comp.* 25.124.10–125.6): they are poetical though not actually a poem (*Comp.* 25.125.6–7). By completing the latent metres in Demosthenes' text, Dionysius simply wants to prove that the poetical ways of expression are there.

IV. CONCLUSION

Having shown the many different ways in which Dionysius applies his method of metathesis, I hope to have made clear that this technique is more useful and successful than is supposed by Greenberg (1958), whose article on this subject is the standard work of reference for modern scholars who discuss metathesis.

Although Dionysius' rewritings resemble those of Heracleodorus and the *kritikoi* in some instances, they serve other purposes besides that of establishing the importance of composition. Analysing prose as well as poetry, Dionysius employs metathesis not only to show that composition (*σύνθεσις*) in general is more important than choice of words (*ἐκλογή*), but also (i) to correct the artificiality of certain passages, thus showing ways to avoid 'unnatural' composition, (ii) to trace specific effects of sound, rhythm and clause arrangement, and (iii) to illustrate the differences between various styles of composition, or to point to the poetical character of prose texts. The method of metathesis thus offers a versatile instrument enabling Dionysius to isolate and highlight characteristics of a given text under one aspect, while leaving other aspects unaffected.

⁵⁵ On the differences between Aristotle and Dionysius in their treatment of this subject, see H. P. Breitenbach, 'The *De Compositione Verborum* of Dionysius of Halicarnassus considered with reference to the rhetoric of Aristotle', *CPh* 6 (1911), 163–179 at 175–6.

Dionysius' language experiments are in no way theoretical exercises. They have a very practical aim, namely to teach the reader how to write in a correct and convincing style. In accordance with the principles of Atticism and classicism, the classical literature is taken as the model for new writing; the method of metathesis shows the merits, defects and particularities of the classical examples.⁵⁶ Metathesis offers Dionysius and his audience the opportunity to compare two formulations of the same thought, and, as Dionysius himself has observed, 'the best method of assessment is the comparative'.⁵⁷

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⁵⁶ For the relation between *μίμησις* and *μετάθεσις*, see the contribution of M. Hurst to the discussion of a paper by H. Flashar, 'Die klassizistische Theorie der Mimesis', in id. (ed.), *Le classicisme à Rome aux Iers siècles avant et après J. C.*, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique 25 (Genève, 1979), 79–111 at 109.

⁵⁷ *Ad Pomp.* 1.224.9–10: *κράτιστος ἐλέγχου τρόπος ὁ κατὰ σύγκρισιν γιγνόμενος*. Dionysius here refers to the method of comparing two or more authors, not to the method of metathesis. The essence of metathesis, however, is also that it enables Dionysius and his readers to *compare* the original text with a new phrasing of the same idea. In that sense, metathesis is also a form of *sunkrisis*.