Raija Vainio

Correct Use of Language according to Roman Grammarians

1. *Hellenismos* and *latinitas*

Linguistics has its origin in a practical need. Ancient philosophers had to take up linguistic problems because they were relevant to their philosophical theories and they needed accurate linguistic expressions. Rhetoricians, who used language as their tool, needed information about correct use of language. Essentially, in the West linguistics developed from explaining old poetical texts, especially Homer, whose works were throughout antiquity used as basic text books in learning Greek. Thus words, forms and phonological peculiarities of the Homeric dialect had to be explained in the schools. Gradually linguistics became an independent discipline as it was differentiated from philosophy, and much of this is due to the Alexandrian scholars during the 1st-3rd centuries BC. Their interest arose when they found discrepancies in the manuscripts of Homer, and the reconstruction of the original text became an almost necessary task (Hovdhaugen 1982: 46-53).

The Greek philosophers have the concept of ἑλληνισμός `correct Greek', and the corresponding term used by the Romans is *latinitas*[1] `correct Latin'. Both of these became a subject of separate treatises after the first century BC.[2] In rhetoric Aristotle (already in

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[1] Marc Baratin (1988) finds such a difference between these concepts in that *hellenismos* is understood only in the sense of correction, whereas with *latinitas* also the relation to Greek must be taken into consideration.

[2] At least Ptolemaeus of Ascalon, Philoxenus, Tryphon, Seleucus and Eirenaeus wrote treatises on *hellenismos*. Pansa and Caper wrote a treatise called *de*

the 4th c. BC) describes correct Greek as the basis of good style
(rhet. 3,5; 1407a19). In the list of the virtues of speech given by the
Stoic philosophers ἑλληνισμός is the most important one, and the
Stoics began to pay attention to not only the virtues but also the
vices of speech (ἀρεταί and κακίαι λόγου). Diogenes of Babylon
(c.240-152 BC) mentions two of the vices, barbarism and solecism,
explaining also the difference between them (Diog.Laert. 7,192): the
former refers to errors in single words, the latter to errors in syntax.
In Latin grammars the chapter on *virtutes et vitia dicendi* discusses
such concepts as *latinitas, barbarismus* and *soloecismus*. The
grammarians became aware of the existence of linguistic variation,
of the fact that there are different registers in the use of language.
Accordingly, they needed to determine what the correct use of
language is. As the gap between spoken and literary Latin grew
larger, chapters on incorrect language became more and more
extensive in the works of the Roman grammarians.[3]

Latinitas involves principles (hereafter referred to as `criteria')
which guide the correct use of language, i.e. orthography,
pronunciation, prosody, inflection, semantics, and syntax. One of the
earliest references to *latinitas* is in the *Rhetorica ad C. Herennium*,
composed in the first century BC, in which it is explained as
preserving the (Latin) language pure and apart from all errors.[4]
According to Cicero, Theophrastus the Peripatetic (c. 370-287 BC)
had distinguished four virtues of style: correct language, clarity,

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latinitate; *latinitas* was the subject also in *de sermone latino* by Antonius
Gnipho and Varro, in *de analogia* by Julius Caesar, in *dubius sermo* by Pliny the
Elder, and in Quintilian's chapters which will be discussed below. See
Siebenborn 1976: 33-34.

[3] Hovdhaugen 1982: 99. The chapter on *virtutes et vitia dicendi* is often given
a Stoic origin but this has been strictly denied by Marc Baratin & Françoise
Desbordes (1986).

[4] Rhet.Her. 4,12,17 *Latinitas est, quae sermonem purum conservat ab omni
vitio remotum.*

propriety, and ornament.[5] Cicero explains that *sermo Latinus* includes blameless words and their use in such a way that the cases, tenses, genders and numbers are correctly preserved so that there is nothing confusing, inconsistent or preposterous in the speech; but in addition the tongue, breathing and tone of voice must be controlled.[6] There are some texts extant in which the criteria of *latinitas* are dealt with. The largest passage is in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (1st c. AD), and for this reason I base my text mostly on him. In other texts the criteria are just briefly mentioned and not discussed much further.

2.   The criteria of *latinitas*

M. Terentius Varro (1st c. BC) is the first author whose criteria of correct Latin we know. His characterization is preserved to us only in two short fragments in the fourth-century grammarians Charisius and Diomedes; Charisius does not mention its origin (Char. GL 1,50,25-51,12)[7] but Diomedes does (Varro frg. 268 GRF, Diom. GL 1,439,16-30). According to Varro, *latinitas* consists of four criteria: *natura* (`nature'), *analogia, consuetudo* (`usage'), and *auctoritas* (`authority'). Quintilian discusses the criteria of correct language in the first book of his *Institutio oratoria* because to become a master orator one has to speak correctly (cf. Quint. inst. 1, pr. 4-5). He presents four categories (*ratio vetustas auctoritas consuetudo*), as

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[5] Cf. Cic. orat. 79; de orat. 3,37-38 *Latine, plane, apte, ornate*; cf. Siebenborn 1976: 25.

[6] Cic. de orat. 3,40 *atque, ut Latine loquamur, non solum videndum est, ut et verba efferamus ea, quae nemo iure reprehendat, et ea sic et casibus et temporibus et genere et numero conservemus, ut ne quid perturbatum ac discrepans aut praeposterum sit, sed etiam lingua et spiritus et vocis sonus est ipse moderandus.*

[7] Dirk M. Schenkeveld (1998) suggests that Pliny the Elder would be the author of the larger preface which Charisius has quoted and of which the fragment concerning *latinitas* is part.

many as Varro, but he subdivides *ratio* (`reason') into *analogia*
which is primary and *etymologia* which is sometimes called into
question. As a fourth criterion Quintilian introduces *vetustas*
(`antiquity').[8]

There has been a lot of speculation about the content of these
criteria. Difficulties are caused because Varro's criteria are only
briefly explained in the preserved fragment, and particularly
problematic has been the meaning of *natura*. On the other hand,
there has not been success in bringing together the set of Varro's
criteria with that of Quintilian's. The contents of Quintilian's
etymology and analogy comparing to Varro's nature and analogy are
not exactly the same.[9] One problem is analogy, and already in
antiquity there were different opinions about it in so far that the
existence of analogy was allegedly questioned. Whether this
controversy between analogy and anomaly really existed, has been
in dispute.[10] Quintilian is the only one who gives the criterion of
antiquity (*vetustas*). The difference between it and authority
(*auctoritas*) has not been satisfactorily explained, and in this paper
I wish to give a new angle to this problem.

I shall introduce the criteria of *latinitas* briefly as such as
Quintilian defines them, because they are most extensively
discussed by him of all grammarians and because he gives most of
them. Later grammarians restrict the amount so that e.g. Augustine
(4/5th c.) has *ratio, auctoritas* and *consuetudo*.[11] Donatianus gives
only two criteria, usage (his term is *usus*) and reason (*ratio*) which,

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[8] Quint. inst. 1,6,1 *sermo constat ratione vetustate auctoritate consuetudine.
rationem praestat praecipue analogia, nonnumquam etymologia.*

[9] For these speculations see e.g. Collart 1954: 202-204; Siebenborn 1976: 151-
154, 159-163; Cavazza 1981: 142-153; cf. also Schenkeveld 1996: 28.

[10] For the modern scholars in favour of it and against it, see Ax 1996: 115.

[11] GL 5,494,3-7; these criteria are met with also in Victorinus GL 6,189,1-7 and
Audax GL 7,322,20-323,3. Cf. Holtz 1981: 136, 267 n.18.

in the same way as Quintilian, he subdivides into analogy and etymology. He describes the relation between the two main criteria as follows: "usage has invented the faculty of speech and reason has approved of it".[12] Consequently the two most important criteria are usage and analogy, which in some form are met with in all grammarians who discuss *latinitas*.[13]

Quintilian's *ratio* `reason' includes the logical structure of language (see von Fritz 1949: 345-350; Lausberg 1960 §466). Analogy refers to the inflection of words, and etymology to the meaning. Quintilian describes the discovery of analogy as follows (inst. 1,6,16):

> For analogy was not sent down from heaven at the creation of mankind to frame the rules of language, but was discovered after they began to speak and to note the terminations of words used in speech. It is therefore based not on reason but on example, nor is it a law of language, but rather a practice which is observed, being in fact the offspring of usage. (Transl. by Butler in Loeb CL)

Analogy can be used for solving an unclear case by comparing it to a similar but clear case. Quintilian finds the comparison especially useful in regard to endings, e.g. when there is doubt about declension or gender of nouns or conjugation of verbs. For instance, in order to determine whether *funis* `rope' is masculine or feminine, one can decide for masculine on the basis of *panis* `bread'. He mentions also another form in which analogy functions, namely the study of diminutives: *funis* is proved masculine by its diminutive *funiculus* (Quint. inst. 1,6,4-6). Etymology inquires into the real meaning of the word and is therefore useful in definitions, but it can

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[12] Don. frg. GL 6,275,13-15 *loquendi facultatem usus invenit, ratio comprobavit. ratio digeritur in duas species, quarum alteram etymologiam, alteram analogiam Graeci dixerunt.*

[13] For the position of *latinitas* in Roman *ars grammatica*, see e.g. Baratin & Desbordes 1986; Baratin 1988; Hovdhaugen 1995.

be helpful also in finding the right form and ruling out barbarisms. For instance, if it is doubtful which variant of the word meaning `noon' is right, *medidies* or *meridies*, etymology decides for *medidies* because the word is derived from *medius dies* (Quint. inst. 1,6,28-30).

In case the criteria are contradictory — if for instance analogy gives a different answer to the problem from usage — how to decide which criterion one should follow? According to Quintilian, usage (*consuetudo*) is the surest guide, because it would be ridiculous to prefer an ancient manner of speaking to the current one. But the problem is what exactly is the usage that should be followed. Quintilian does not mean the language spoken by the majority, the common people, because it inevitably contains barbarisms. Therefore usage is defined as the agreed practice of the educated (*consensus eruditorum*) which involves correct language (Quint. inst. 1,6,3; 1,6,43-45). In the fragment which is assigned to Varro, usage and analogy are described as follows: "usage is not to be compared with the principles of analogy but with its force, since usage only accepts that which has gained strength through the consensus of many people, and in such a way that reason does not approve of it but concedes it."[14] Since some analogically created forms are clearly doubtful, Quintilian concludes that "it is one thing to speak Latin, another to speak grammar".[15]

Authority (*auctoritas*) is said to be the most recent criterion among those mentioned so far. It is advised to have recourse to

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[14] Transl. by Hovdhaugen 1982: 99. Char. GL 1,51,6-8 (almost the same in Diom. GL 1,439,22-25) *consuetudo non arte analogiae sed viribus par est, ideo solum recepta, quod multorum consensione convaluit, ita tamen ut illi ratio non accedat sed indulgeat.*

[15] Quint. inst. 1,6,27 *mihi non inuenuste dici videtur aliud esse Latine, aliud grammatice loqui.* Transl. by Taylor 1995: 110.

authority as if to a sacred altar, if other means fail.[16] According to Quintilian (inst. 1,6,2), the authors who can be looked upon as models for correct language are orators and historians, not poets, because the latter are sometimes forced to use forms which are not acceptable in prose (so called metaplasms). Daniel J. Taylor remarks (1995: 110) that "Quintilian may be uniquely biased on this point". He refers here to the later grammarians' way of explaining the difference between metaplasm and barbarism by the authority of poets. The concept of *auctoritas* is usually connected with metaplasm, which leads to the poets being mentioned as authorities.[17] For Quintilian *auctoritas* as a criterion of correct language has a slightly different content. The interest of a rhetorician was not in poetical but in earlier oratorical texts because old speeches were used as material in producing new ones. In having recourse to authorities, Quintilian warns against adopting any word form which can be found in the authors' texts but, he claims, one must show some judgement. Not automatically every form which can be found in texts, although used by the best authors, has authority behind it (Quint. inst. 1,6,42).

Because usage changes in the course of time there are words and forms which earlier have been correct and part of usage but have since become obsolete. Quintilian gives the criterion of antiquity (*vetustas*) which is not mentioned by anyone else. Antiquity is closely related to authority, and Quintilian says himself that what is said about *vetustas* also concerns *auctoritas* (Quint. inst. 1,6,42). Archaic words give speech a certain kind of majesty and charm because they have the authority of age behind them, and for the very reason that they are used sparingly they have the charm of novelty. This will be the case provided that the use of such words

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[16] Char. GL 1,51,9; cf. Schenkeveld 1996: 20. In Diom. GL 1,439,27 the expression instead of altar is "as if to an anchor"; cf. Siebenborn 1976: 93 and n.4.

[17] Cf. my forthcoming article on Barbarism and metaplasm.

is not exaggerated and that the words are not so old that they are drawn from a remote period of time. In the same way as the best of new words are the oldest, the best of archaic words are the newest (Quint. inst. 1,6,39-41). Some orators show a terrible misuse of archaic words since they do not choose the words according to what they have to say, but hunt for suitable subjects in order to provide an opportunity for the use of such words (Quint. inst. 8,3,30).

As already mentioned, Quintilian's *ratio* (analogy and etymology) applies to the logical structure of language. On the other hand authority and antiquity mainly concern the vocabulary. Since he was a rhetorician, words were of great importance to Quintilian. The literature which in Varro's time was fresh and recent was over hundred years older in Quintilian's time, when the vocabulary contained many more old words, and this situation necessitated comment. The issue is the vocabulary, its preservation and renewal, and on the other hand understanding, because old institutions, religious institutions for instance, used words which could no longer be understood but which could not be altered either.[18]

3. The difference between *auctoritas* and *vetustas*

What is the actual difference between Quintilian's *auctoritas* and *vetustas*? As mentioned above, he himself lets us understand that these criteria are fairly similar (inst. 1,6,42). Karl Barwick (1922: 213-215) has suggested that the difference would be in the authors who are quoted: authority would refer to classical and antiquity to pre-classical authors.[19] Thus the issue would be that of age. But this suggestion does not seem to be valid on the basis of Quintilian's examples. In discussing authority, Quintilian quotes words from

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[18] Cf. Quint. inst. 1,6,40-41 *Saliorum carmina uix sacerdotibus suis satis intellecta. sed illa mutari uetat religio et consecratis utendum est.*

[19] According to Siebenborn (1976: 95) the grammarian whom Charisius used as a source in chapter 1,15 of his *ars grammatica* refers to classical authors as *auctores* but to pre-classical as *veteres* (see also Schenkeveld 1998).

orators of the first century BC but also from Cato the Elder (234-149 BC). On grounds of age, Cato the Elder should not be among the examples of authority but among those of antiquity (Siebenborn 1976: 95). Jean Cousin (1935: 49) has argued that the employment of *vetustas* would act as a warning against the use of neologisms, but his argument has been convincingly rejected already by Kurt von Fritz (1949: 350). The suggestion of von Fritz (1949: 350-352), supported by Elmar Siebenborn (1976: 95-96), does not seem to make an actual distinction between these concepts. Both criteria allow the possibility of temporarily using words which are contrary to current usage. The difference would in this case be that *vetustas* would refer to archaic words whereas *auctoritas* could refer to archaic but also to newer words. As Franco Cavazza points out (1981: 147-149), this difference seems to be rather artificial because *vetustas* could then be easily seen as part of *auctoritas* — and for later grammarians *auctoritas* alone is enough. But Cavazza too accepts this explanation, as a better one has not been offered.

Giving Quintilian's examples some closer consideration we could find a different argument for this division. All the examples he gives are of the kind that should not in his opinion be employed, because they too strikingly violate current usage. The examples associated with *vetustas* are four (inst. 1,6,40): *topper* (= *cito, fortasse* `quickly, perhaps'), *antegerio* (= *valde* `greatly'), *exanclare* (= *exhaurire* `to drain'), and *prosapia* (= *genus, stirps* `lineage, family'). *Topper* is quite rare in the Roman literature, and according to Festus (532 L.) old poets like Naevius, Livius Andronicus and Accius have used it, and also the historian Coelius Antipater (2nd c. BC). *Antegerio* is even more rare, and occurs only in glosses (cf. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* s.v.). But *exanclare* is used by old poets (e.g. Ennius, Accius, Plautus) and by Lucilius (2nd c. BC), also by Cicero, which may be somewhat surprising, considering Quintilian's disapproval of the word. But two of the passages included in Cicero's prose are actually Latin translations of Sophocles (Cic. Tusc. 2,20) and Homer (Cic. div. 2,64). The other two occurrences (Cic. Tusc. 1,118 and ac. 2,108) are connected with the word *labor*;

labores or *aerumnas exanclare* seems to be an old phrase (on *aerumnae*, see below), which would explain the use of this verb also by Cicero. The fourth example, *prosapia*, is also used once by Cicero but he states in that connection that it is an old word (Tim. 39 *ut utamur vetere verbo, prosapiam*). It is used by Plautus twice in his comedies (Curc. 393; Merc. 634) and by Cato the Elder in old prose (orig. 28; early 2nd c. BC).

There is a difference in introducing the examples of *auctoritas* (inst. 1,6,42): Quintilian mentions the author from whom the word in question is taken. Furthermore, the examples seem to concern the form of words. Among them there are two derivatives formed with the suffix -*bundus* (*tuburchinabundus, lurchinabundus* `eating greedily' used by Cato) and a derivative which is declined differently from normal (*parricidatus, us* `murder' by Caelius Rufus, usually *parricidium, ii*). In addition Quintilian mentions three examples which concern the gender of a noun: *hi lodices* (*lodix* `blanket' masculine in Asinius Pollio, usually feminine), *gladiola* (`small swords' neuter in Messala Corvinus; the diminutive is derived from *gladius* which is masculine, and according to Quintilian inst. 1,6,6 the diminutive should be of the same gender), *colli* (`necks' masculine in Licinius Calvus, usually neuter). These words as such are not rare but they are used by the authors in a gender different from the normal. Already before the actual discussion on *auctoritas* Quintilian gives three examples from Virgil in order to show why poets should not be taken as authorities concerning correct use of language (inst. 1,6,2). These too concern the gender of a noun. Virgil uses *stirps* as masculine (Aen. 12,208; `stem', usually feminine), and *palumbes* (ecl. 3,69; `wood-pigeon', usually masculine) and *silex* as feminine (ecl. 1,15; `flint', usually masculine).

On the contrary *vetustas* seems to concern more closely the meaning of the word: the word as such is archaic, it has been in a restricted use mostly by old poets, and some synonym is preferable in the current usage. *Auctoritas* on the other hand concerns more the use of a quite common word in a rare form: the word itself is

understandable but the form is unusual. Quintilian deals with archaic words also in his eighth book (inst. 8,3,24-30) because the use of such words is really a question of style and not of grammar.[20] In the opening statement of the passage Quintilian does not use the word *vetustas* but *antiquitas* instead (inst. 8,3,24):

> Cum sint autem uerba propria ficta tralata, propriis dignitatem dat antiquitas. namque et sanctiorem et magis admirabilem faciunt orationem, quibus non quilibet fuerit usurus, eoque ornamento acerrimi iudicii P. Vergilius unice est usus.

> "Words are proper, newly-coined or metaphorical. In the case of proper words there is a special dignity conferred by antiquity, since old words, which not everyone would think of using, give our style a venerable and majestic air: this is a form of ornament of which Virgil, with his perfect taste, has made unique use." (Transl. by Butler)

Therefore the passage actually could concern both *vetustas* and *auctoritas*, which would also be understandable because these criteria are much the same. Mentioning Virgil and giving examples from him draws attention rather to *auctoritas*, although Virgil is also cited as a skilled user of archaic words. On the other hand, Quintilian speaks about the authority of antiquity,[21] which suggests *vetustas*. The main purpose of this passage is to exemplify both acceptable and unacceptable archaic words, not to deal with the difference between *vetustas* and *auctoritas*. But how does my

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[20] Cf. von Fritz 1949: 355. Cf. Quint. inst. 8,3,1; transl. by Butler: "I now come to the subject of ornament, in which, more than in any other department, the orator undoubtedly allows himself the greatest indulgence. For a speaker wins but trifling praise if he does no more than speak with correctness and lucidity; in fact his speech seems rather to be free from blemish than to have any positive merit."

[21] Quint. inst. 8,3,25 *uetustatis inimitabilem arti auctoritatem*; also in 1,6,39 *uerba a uetustate repetita [...] auctoritatem antiquitatis habent.*

suggestion, the difference between meaning and form, function in connection with the examples given in this passage?

Quintilian gives here five examples of archaic words used by Virgil: *olli* (e.g. Aen. 1,254; archaic form for *illi*),[22] *quianam* (Aen. 5,13; 10,6 = *quare* `why'), *moerus* (Aen. 10,24; archaic form for *murus* `wall'),[23] *pone* (e.g. Aen. 2,725 = *post* `behind'), and *porricere* (Aen. 5,238; 776 = *offerre* `to offer as a sacrifice').[24] Some of the further examples which he gives he evaluates as hopelessly outdated, some of them he still finds useful. The form *quaeso* (`to ask') is old enough, there is no need to use the archaic form *quaiso* of this verb.[25] Although *oppido* (= *valde, omnino* `greatly, altogether') was still in use a while before (e.g. by Cicero, de orat. 2,259; fin. 3,33), Quintilian's contemporaries would find it intolerable. There is no need to use a word like *aerumnae* (= *labores* `labour')[26] according to Quintilian, although Cicero makes

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[22] *Olli* is the dative singular form of the archaic *ollus* for the pronoun *ille* (Lindsay 1894, VII §18).

[23] The Indo-European *oi* was preserved in Latin till the second century BC, and the diphthong came then to be written *oe*, and finally in most words, as in *mūrus*, passed into the sound *ū* (Lindsay 1894, IV §38). Cf. Servius' commentary on Virgil (Aen. 10,24): `*moerorum' pro `murorum' antique: nam veteres pleraque eorum quae nos per `u' dicimus, per `oe' diphthongon pronuntiabant.*

[24] The reading of the manuscripts is uncertain, *porricere* is suggested by Haupt in 1870; Ribbeck suggests *pellacia* `seductiveness' which is supported by Verg. Aen. 2,90.

[25] The new spelling *ae* for the Indo-European diphthong *ai* is met with in inscriptions from the second century BC; the diphthong further developed into a monophthong *ē*. In the first century AD, especially during the reign of the emperor Claudius, there was a fashion for archaisms. This shows up in inscriptions as the spelling *ai*, e.g. *Caisar* (Lindsay 1894, IV §27-29).

[26] The reading is uncertain; the emendation of Zumpt is *aerumnosum* (`wretched').

quite a lot of use of it (e.g. inv. 2,102; Sest. 7; 49). Perhaps we can conclude that these two words have grown old during almost a hundred years between Cicero and Quintilian. *Reor* (= *puto* `to think') is tolerable whereas *autumo* (= *iudico* `to think, judge') belongs to tragedy. But besides Pacuvius (trag. 118) the latter verb is used also by Plautus in his comedies (e.g. Capt. 236; Most. 97; 1132). Quintilian's text concerning the characterization of *proles* (= *progenies* `offspring') is very corrupt; one emendation of the text suggests that this word would be acceptable only in poetry, and this interpretation is supported by Cicero (de orat. 3,153). Two of Quintilian's examples are the same as he used in the passage of the first book (see above): *antegerio*, which only a pretentious man would use, and *prosapia*, which he finds tasteless. Words like *nuncupare* (`to declare') and *fari* (`to speak') are necessary sometimes.

Three of these examples, *olli, moerus* and *quaiso*, seem to be contradictory to my interpretation since *ille, murus* and *quaeso* certainly are words usual enough to belong to current usage. But if we compare these examples to those which Quintilian gives of *auctoritas* in the first book, they still are different. These words have not been artificially formed by a certain author but they have gone through a process of linguistic change, quite a natural one in the history of Latin. Quintilian actually says it himself right after his examples (inst. 8,3,26): *totus prope mutatus est sermo*, "almost the whole language has changed", and also in connection with the example *quaeso*, which he finds old enough (see above). I draw the conclusion that the passage in the eighth book concerns *vetustas*, to which the examples apply, but an air of *auctoritas* lurks in the background. Consequently, the main difference which I see between these two criteria is that *vetustas* actually means old usage, whereas the words justified by *auctoritas* have never been a part of common usage. If someone coined a new word it most probably was based on an old one; words were hardly created from nothing. Derivatives therefore are an essential group of words that belong under *auctoritas*. In short, Quintilian seems to be dealing with neologisms

under the criterion of *auctoritas* and furthermore neologisms of the
kind that usage has not approved. Of course there are words coined
by certain authors which then have been accepted into general
usage.[27] But such words do not belong under the criterion of
auctoritas any more because their use is now justified by the usage
itself.

Why would Quintilian (or a predecessor of his if he has used
someone as a source) make this kind of distinction? The tendency to
separate form and meaning also seems to appear in Quintilian in
other connections. It appears in *ratio* which he divides into analogy
and etymology: analogy pertains to form, etymology to meaning. It
appears in still another connection, namely in regard to linguistic
errors. In dealing with barbarisms Quintilian says (inst. 1,5,10) that
the most general type concerns changes of elements in a word: an
element (letter, syllable) is added or deleted, two elements change
places, or an element is substituted for another. This type of course
refers to the form. Quintilian however mentions a particular type of
barbarism (inst. 1,5,8), an occurrence of a barbarian word (i.e. non-
Latin or non-Greek) in Latin speech, which again refers to the
meaning. Later grammarians give this type a name of its own,
barbarolexis (see Vainio 1994).

4.   *Vetustas* as part of Quintilian's system

Quintilian seems to have created a system of criteria for *latinitas*
which includes two pairs, analogy and authority on the one hand and
etymology and antiquity on the other. The first pair concerns the
form of a word (*forma*) and the second the meaning (*sensus*). Above
these two pairs there is usage, which of course includes both form
and meaning. In creating this system it was important to preserve the
old division into four criteria. Therefore analogy and etymology are

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[27] Cf. Quint. inst. 8,3,31-37; 8,3,34 *nam et quae uetera nunc sunt, fuerunt olim
noua, et quaedam sunt in usu perquam recentia.* — For the ancient views on
derivation and authority, see Vaahtera 1998 passim.

under the heading *ratio*. One criterion for each pair, authority for the first pair and antiquity for the second, allows the possibility for usage to be violated. Whereas the other members of the pairs, analogy of the first and etymology of the second, may be violated by the usage; for instance if the inflection of a word is not analogical, or if a word has changed in the course of time and does not look right, judging from its etymology. Because the usage is the most important criterion that guides the correct use of language, later grammarians do not want to have on the list those criteria by which the usage can be violated (authority and antiquity).

There has been much discussion on the possible source of Quintilian's theory. As Taylor (1995: 110) remarks, Quintilian gives no clue as to whether he has formed it himself or whether it is a product of some unnamed source. But it would not surprise me if this system were Quintilian's own. Certainly at least the accusation raised by some earlier scholars that Quintilian had no real insight into the matter he was discussing and that he just mechanically combined various theories, leading to confusion, has already been proven wrong by von Fritz (1949: 345-352). As a rhetorician Quintilian has constantly in mind the situation in practice: an orator using words and forming sentences in as convincing a way as possible. Therefore usage is especially important for him as a guide to the correct use of language; but for the same reason he also pays much attention to words and more especially to the old words which he found in earlier speeches.

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Contact address:
Raija Vainio
Department of Classics, University of Turku
Henrikinkatu 2
FIN-20014 Turku, Finland
E-mail: raija.vainio@utu.fi