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SIGMATISM IN THE *PROOEMIUM* OF NEMESIANUS' *CYNEGETICA*

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Sigmatism in the ancient tradition

The consonant 's' sounded unpleasant to both Greek and Roman ears. Ancient grammarians and modern scholars referred its accumulation within short passages to the term "sigmatism"². Dionysius of Halicarnassus claims that the consonant 's' is unpleasant, because

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² It means the accumulation of the consonant 's' in different positions: both at the beginning (alliteration) and at the end of words, as well as within them. J. Korpanty, *Sygmatyzm łaciński*, in: *Prace komisji filologii klasycznej*, ed. R. Turasiewicz, Kraków 1997, p. 5.

when used excessively it causes disgust and even pain. According to his opinion its articulation can resemble a clenched hiss, which seems similar to the voice of unreasonable animals, rather than to the speech of any intelligent beings³. That is a proof that the ‘s’ sound did not have a good reputation in ancient times.

Quintilian, the Roman theoretician, speaks very unfavourably about ‘s’ and calls it an unpleasant-sounding letter (*absona littera*)⁴. Despite that in ancient times, it was considered “unpleasant to the ears”, consonant ‘s’ was often present in both poetry and ancient prose. The fact that it is was frequently used in Latin texts⁵ can be explained by its high activity in inflection. In addition, ‘s’ is an extremely economical phoneme⁶. It does not require too much effort during articulation, and at the same time is optimally effective due to the onomatopoeic aspect⁷.

Sigmatism in Nemesianus’ *Cynegetica* – general remarks

Contemporary research carried out on sigmatism and its role led to various interpretations⁸. It was often used consciously and

³ Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 14, 80; Pind. *Frag.* 86, 1–2.

⁴ Quint. *Inst.* 12, 10, 32.

⁵ J. Korpanty, „Pojedynek Eneasza z Turnusem („Eneida” XXII 887-952): analiza wybranych elementów stylistycznych”, „Scripta Classica” 2009, vol. 6, p. 75.

⁶ It is included in the group of consonants that are articulated by the least degree of opening of speech organs (H. Wolanin, *Gramatyka opisowa klasycznej łaciny w ujęciu strukturalnym*. Kraków 2012, p. 28). To be precise, ‘s’ belongs to the semi-vowels (as the same as ‘f’, ‘l’, ‘m’, ‘n’, ‘r’ and ‘v’). The remaining consonants, so-called *muta*, cannot be formed without an interruption of the sound by the lips’ closing. Thus, they very often require an accompanying vowel be correctly and fully pronounced. *First Latin Lessons Containing the Most Important Parts of the Grammar of the Latin Language*, ed. Ch. Anthon, New York 1858, p. 2.

⁷ J. Korpanty, *Sygmetyzm łaciński*, in: *Prace komisji filologii klasycznej*, ed. R. Turasiewicz, Kraków 1997, p. 6 et seqq.; por. K. Lesiak, *Estetyka dźwięku, czyli instrumentacja dźwiękowa oraz jej praktyczna realizacja w poezji epickiej mistrzów łacińskiego heksametru: Lukrecjusza, Wergiliusza i Owidiusza*. Katowice 2007, p. 108.

⁸ Scott and Todd conducted analyzes in the field of sigmatism, proving partly that the density of ‘s’, which is used 8, 9, 10 times in one verse – does not always

intentionally to obtain the desired sound and rhythmic effects. Problematic phenomenon of accumulation of the consonant 's' occurs quite often in Nemesianus' *Cynegetica*⁹. Let us look at the issues related to the occurrence of sigmatism in the mentioned treatise on hunting and try to specify whether each appearance of this phenomenon has an expressive value. Furthermore, we will try to explain what type of emotions it announces, and what role is played by the poet's musical sensitivity.

Due to the volume framework, in this article we will limit ourselves to describing the phenomenon of sigmatism only in the *prooemium* (verses 1–102) of *Cynegetica*. An analysis of the remaining passages with reference to sigmatism, as well as other categories determining

herald negative emotions in the semantic field. However, these findings apply only to the texts of Homer and the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes. J.A. Scott, "Sigmatism in Greek Dramatic Poetry". *AJPh* 1908, no. 29, pp. 69–77; O.J. Todd, "The Effect of Sigmatism as Shown In Homer". *AJP* 1909, no. 30, pp. 72–77.

⁹ Similar aesthetic and sound impressions are caused by the phenomenon of sigmatism visible in chosen verses of *Cynegetica* (e.g. 17–24) written by Grattius Faliscus. Similar to the place discussed in Nemesianus' poem, i.e. the invocation to Diana, also in this case the passage, in which the poet addresses the goddess of hunting will be illustrated. The accumulation of the consonant 's', often juxtaposed in close proximity to the vibrant 'r' and the sounds of 't' or 'f' and 'l' reflects the image of the characters who are following the goddess in her retinue. The 's' sound in the case of Naiads seems to imitate the water splash from fountains; while in relation to Silvanus – it resembles the sound of the forest and the rustling olive leaves. Verses 22nd up to 25th resonate in turn musically reflecting the idea of a song and a wild, forest full of sinister beasts, which the poet is about to defeat and that is why he consciously prepares appropriate weapon to act and in that way to pursue the hunting arts. The sigmatism used by Grattius to evoke an appropriate sound impressions and influence the reader's imagination casts doubt upon the researchers' opinion on the simplicity and technicality of the descriptions presented by the poet. It is necessary to mention that nowadays Grattius is criticized for the lack of poetical sensitivity, and thus depreciated (wrongly) in comparison with Nemesianus. Vide: Gratt. *Cyn.* 17–24: *adScivere tuo comiteS Sub nomine divae/ centum: omneS nemorum, umenteS de FontibuS omneS/ NaideS, et Latii Satyri FaunuSque Subibant/ MaenaliuSque puer domitrixque Idaea leonum/ mater et inculto SilvanuS termite gaudenS./ his ego praeSidibuS noStram defendere Sortem/ contra mille feraS et non Sine carmine iuSSuS,/ carmine et arma dabo et venandi perSequar arteS [...].*

the tone of the treaty, is available in a monograph devoted to imaging by Nemesianus¹⁰. The Carthaginian poet apart from the *Cynegetica* wrote also four eclogues, which had been regarded as works of Calpurnius Siculus until 1844. Bucolics written by the mentioned Carthaginian poet are also an excellent research material due to the variety of phenomena of sound instrumentation visible in his texts. It prompted the academics carrying out the research on Nemesianus' poetry, to define the instrumental motif in his four Eclogues using the musical-rumour antithesis¹¹.

Concentrating on the sound layer of the analysed *prooemium*, we can state that the alliteration is the most common way of valorising.

¹⁰ A. Kucz, "Debemus carmina Baccho" – analisi dell'Egloga III di Nemesiano", in: *Szkie o antyku*. T. 3. *Hermeneutyka wina*. Katowice 2017, p. 82.

¹¹ Nemesianus also wrote two treatises *Haliutica* and *Nautica*, which unfortunately have not survived. The only historical source of information about the Carthaginian poet's life and works is the concise mention in *Historia Augusta* about Numerianus, son of Karus, who competed with Nemesianus in a poetic competition: "in the art of pronunciation, that as a boy he publicly recited and created lofty works, [...] he defeated all contemporary poets. The emperor also competed with Olympus Nemesianus, the author of *Haliutica*, *Cynegetica* and *Nautica*, who stood out from the others with a very rich poetic technique". *Hist. Aug.* 30.11.1–2.1: *Numerianus, Cari filius moratus egregi[a]e et vere dignus imperio, eloquentia etiam praepollens, adeo ut puer public[a]e declamaverit feranturque illius scripta nobilia, [...] ut omnes poetas sui temporis vicerit. nam et cum Olympio Nemesiano contendit, qui haliutiká kynēetiká et nautiká scripsit quique omnibus coloribus inlustratus emicuit*. It is thought that the Carthaginian poet went to Rome in 283–284, where he competed with Emperor Numerian in the aforementioned poetry competition. Perhaps then he wrote *Cynegetica*. More information about Nemesianus' life and work: R. Verdière, *Poetae Bucolici Cynegetique Minores*. Vol.1: *Gratii Cynegeticon Libri quae supersunt, texte et traduction*. Vol. 2: *Commentaire*. Wetteren 1964, pp. 1–27; A. Sestili, *Marco Aurelio Olimpico Nemesiano. Il cynegetico. Trattato sulla caccia*, Roma 2011, pp. 20–26; E. Raynaud, *Némésien. Poèmes sur la chasse*, Paris 1931, pp. 173–179; J.W. Duff, A.M. Duff, *Nemesianus: Cynegetica*, in: *Minor Latin Poets II*, Cambridge 1998⁶, pp. 451–55; P. Volpilhac, *Némésien. Oeuvres*, Paris 1975, pp. 7–14; A. Kucz, E. Gryksa, *Nemezjan w kręgu antycznej tradycji łowieckiej*, Katowice 2019, pp. 29–33. A. Kucz, "Debemus carmina Baccho" – analisi dell'Egloga III di Nemesiano", in: *Szkie o antyku*. T. 3. *Hermeneutyka wina*. Katowice 2017, pp. 81–87; L. Ferri, L. Moreschini, *Nemesiano. Le egloghe*, Roma 1994, pp. 9–13.

The 's' is the consonant, which is repeated constantly in it¹². Therefore, in the case of the text we examine, alliteration also results in sigmatism. In the *prooemium* itself, the consonant 's' appears up to 305 times. It does not appear only in six out of 102 verses, where usually it is possible to notice a change of subject¹³.

Analysis of the *prooemium* (Nem. Cyn. 1–102)

Moreover, in verses no 2, 21, 24, 33, 34, 38, 39, there is the phenomenon of 's' convergence at the end of the word and at the beginning of the next, which was called *collisive alliteration* by Highet¹⁴. This treatment results not only in imitative but also emotional effects. In addition to the occurrence of sigmatism in the form of collision alliteration, examples illustrate the presence of the consonant 's' both within the initial and final position of the sound. The consonant 's' together with 'r' and 't' in the second verse as well as syllabic homophony (*cur cur rur*) illustrate the *clangor*¹⁵ typical of hunting actions, i.e. an unpleasant noise, which was to cause panic among animals during the hunting expedition and thus giving a hunter an opportunity to kill them¹⁶:

¹² The repetition of the same sounds, not only of the initial sound, and in other positions is also called *alliteration*. A. Kulawik, *Poetyka. Wstęp do teorii dzieła literackiego*, Kraków 1994, pp. 60–61.

¹³ The consonant does not appear in verses 35, 46, 58, 68, 71, 85. The findings concern only the *prooemium*.

¹⁴ G. Highet, "Consonant Clashes in Latin Poetry". "Classical Philology" 1974, vol. 69, pp. 178–185.

¹⁵ In the Silesian dialect it is: "klank".

¹⁶ It is worth mentioning that a noise during the hunting expedition is also a key factor when animals want to protect themselves. The deer belongs to the animals, which rely heavily on their sense of smell. If the wind is unfavourable for hunters, the mentioned animals could scent the enemy and consciously change their directions and location. Sometimes they even make a noise (a kind of snort) by blowing through their nostrils to warn other deers in a herd of danger. The noise made by them sounds like a train whistle or blowing on an empty rifle cartridge. R.P. Smith, *Deer hunting*, Mechanicsburg 2011, p. 10.

diScurSuque citoS, Securi proelia ruriS,
“We discover swift chases and battles of a peaceful village¹⁷”

The sound of hunting is further enhanced by the use of the noun “proelia” meaning “a battle”. War metaphor in this passage allows imagining the anxiety of animals in the forest, reminiscent of the chaos prevailing on a battlefield. It is also important to notice the animal-hunter contrast, which can be compared to the relationship of enemies during the fight¹⁸.

In verse 21st, the consonant ‘s’ reflects the oozing of blood six times:

Sunt qui Sacrilego roranteS Sanguine thyrSoS
“There are those who (want to talk) about blood-thirsty thyrsus.”
(Nem. *Cyn.* 21)

Similarly, the consonant ‘s’ is used as spirant in the verse 24th. It sounds like the whistle of the cut off heads of men, who were murdered on the wedding night by Danaid:

imperium SponSaSque truceS Sub foedere primo
“and cruel brides who, according to the agreement on the wedding night” (Nem. *Cyn.* 24)

¹⁷ All passages from Nemesianus’ *Cynegetica* are quoted in authors’ own translation.

¹⁸ This type of metaphor has already been visible in Homer’s “Iliad”. An example can be the fragment of Book 10th about the pursuit of Dolon, who is dressed in the pelt of a grey wolf: “Then he [sc. Dolon] cast about his shoulders his curved bow, and thereover clad him in the skin of a gray wolf, and on his head he set a cap of ferret skin, and grasped a sharp javelin, and went his way toward the ships from the host ; howbeit he was not to return again from the ships, and bear tidings to Hector [...]. But when they were [sc. Odysseus and Diomed] a spear-cast off or even less, he knew them for foemen and plied his limbs swiftly in flight, and they speedily set out in pursuit. And as when two sharp-fanged hounds, skilled in the hunt, press hard on a doe or a hare in a wooded place, and it ever runneth screaming before them; even so did the son of Tydeus, and Odysseus, sacker of cities, cut Dolon off from the host and ever pursue hard after him” [quoted after: Murray 1924]. Vide: D. Steiner, “Wolf’s Justice”: *The Iliadic Doloneia and the Semiotics of Wolves*, CA 2015, vol. 34/2, p. 335.

In verses 33rd and 34th, thanks to the density of ‘s’, one can hear the rustling wings, lifting Tereus after the bestial feast:

*miratumque rudeS Se tollere Terea pinnaS
poSt epulaS, Philomela, tuaS; Sunt ardua mundi*

“remember Tereus’s astonishment that, although he had never flown before,
after your feast, Filomeno, he flew upon on the wings. Are” (Nem. *Cyn.* 33–34)

Condensation of ‘s’ in verses 30th and 31st resembles an unpleasant hiss of scaled Kadmos and depicts the fear of the virgin Io, who was guarded by Hundred-Eyes Argos at the order of the jealous Hera:

*Sunt qui SquamoSi referant fera Sibila Cadmi
Stellatumque oculiS cuStodem virginiS IuS*

“There are those who talk about the wild hiss of Kadmos, who was covered with the scales and about the star-shaped guardian of the virgin Io.” (Nem. *Cyn.* 30–31)

Verse 36th deserves a special attention due to the intensity of the overwhelming consonant ‘s’, which is combined with ‘t’ and ‘f’ sounds¹⁹. The combination provides the effect of the thunder and lightning strike at Faeton, thanks to which Zeus did not let the conflagration threaten the whole world. In the next verse, i.e. 38th, the consonant ‘s’ reflects the sound of the forests mourning a brother, and in verse 39th, the eight appearances of ‘s’ sounds like blood running down the tables:

*exStinctaSque canant emiSSo fulmine flammaS
“they celebrate the conflagration extinguished by lightning” (Nem. *Cyn.* 36)
*et flenteS Semper germani funere SilvaS.**

¹⁹ Quint. *Inst.* 12, 10, 29.

“And also forests that are constantly mourning the death of their brother.” (Nem. *Cyn.* 38)

Tantalidum caSuS et SparSaS Sanguine menSaS

“About Tantalide accidents and bloodstained tables” (Nem. *Cyn.* 39)

The collusive alliteration, sigmatism and metastases present in verses 48th, 49th and 50th, make it easier to imagine the rush associated with tracking a victim sought by a hunter in the company of a sniffing dog in the forest or among the bulrush:

noS SaltuS virideSque plagaS campoSque patenteS
Scrutamur totiSque citi diScurrimuS arviS
et variaS cupimuS facili cane Sumere praedaS;

“We, however, penetrate forest hills, spaces full of greenery and endless fields, we traverse briskly expansive plots and we want to capture all kinds of animals with the help of a slender dog.” (Nem. *Cyn.* 48–50)

For the same purpose, the author used voice instrumentation, i.e. sigmatism in initial, middle and final sound, collusive alliteration and the metastrophy (run-on-line / enjambement) in the next passus including verses 51–57. In the mentioned passage, hunting actions were presented in an ekphrastic way. Due to the use of sigmatism in various forms and other instrumentation treatments, the reader can imagine the confusion prevailing during hunting and the general panic caused by the chase for scared animals and their escape between bushes or trees:

noS timidoS leporeS, imbelleS figere dammaS
audaceSque lupoS, vulpem captare doloSam
gaudemuS; nos flumineaS errare per umbraS
malumuS et placidiS ichneumona quaerere ripiS
inter harundineaS Segetes faelemque minacem
arboriS in trunco longiS praefigere teliS
implicitumque Sinu Spinosi corporis erem
ferre domum;

“We are happy to shot fearful rabbits, gentle deer, we catch bold wolves or a cunning fox; we prefer to wander in the dark on the banks of the river and among the coastal reeds and in the reed fields look for mongooses, pierce a dangerous wildcat on the trunk of the tree with a long weapon; bring home a curled up porcupine with a thorny body.” (Nem. *Cyn.* 51–57)

The accumulation of the consonant ‘s’ is heard in verses 59th and 60th. Their meaning indicates the intended use of the sigmatism. The density of consonant ‘s’ reflects here the noise of water caused by the movement of oars. However, it should be remembered that thanks to the use of a nautical metaphor, these poems are rather metaphorical than descriptive:

*dum non magna ratiS, viciniS Sueta moveri
litoribuS tutoSque SinuS percurrere remiS,*

“as long as the boat, which is small, however accustomed to navigate among the nearby coasts and traverse safe bays with the help of oars” (Nem. *Cyn.* 59–60)

Particularly noteworthy is verse 63rd announcing the commemoration of *meliore lyra*, the triumphant sons of Karus. However, it turns out to be extremely puzzling due to the interpretation of the word *mox*²⁰. The spirant ‘s’ causes that the problematic verse, which is additionally strengthened by two consonants ‘l’, becomes uniquely musical. The consonant ‘l’ was regarded as an unbelievably pleasant sound to the ear in both Greek and Latin²¹. Thanks to it, the soundtrack reveals the poet’s attachment to the abovementioned winners who deserve special recognition and honour:

²⁰ For more information about interpretation of the term *mox* in verse 63rd vide: A. Kucz, E. Gryksa, *Nemezjan w kręgu antycznej tradycji łowieckiej*, Katowice 2019, pp. 36–37.

²¹ Naev. *fr. com* 113: *Libera lingua loquemur ludis Liberalibus.*

mox vestroS melioreS lyra memorare triumphoS

“Soon, I will commemorate your triumphs with a sublime song²²”
(Nem. *Cyn.* 63)

As far as the passus in honor of the divine sons of Karus²³ – Karinus and Numerianus – is concerned, it is necessary to stress that the verse 72nd is particularly attractive. That is due to sonorous interpretations, i.e. five folds usage of ‘s’ and syllabic homophony with a vibrating sound ‘r’ (er er er ar), which intensifies anxiety, tremor and noise, characteristic emotions during conquering Persian lands and Babylonian fortresses as revenge for violated dignity as well as the majesty of the Roman Empire:

utque intima frater

PerSidoS et vetereS BabylonoS ceperit arceS

“how your brother conquered the farthest ends of Persia
and the ancient strongholds of Babylon” (Nem. *Cyn.* 72)

There is no doubt that the presence of sigmatism, in the form of six times usage of the consonant ‘s’, and the vibrating sound of ‘r’ and ‘t’ in verse 79th is the intended effect. Double collusive alliteration was used to strengthen the message. Thanks to these treatments, the passus creates/ illustrates an atmosphere of tension and impatience:

temporiS impatiens SenSuS Spretorque morarum

“Impatient temperament, despising the delay” (Nem. *Cyn.* 79)

The illusion of “vivid” sound is created by the sigmatism present in verse 85th, which closes the passage devoted to the eminent imperial sons and their triumphs. Intentional fivefold appearance of ‘s’ allows “hearing” the menacing dragons. Banners with images

²² Cf. Verg. *G.* 3, 46 and Calp. *Ecl.* 4, 162–163.

²³ This passus, from some researchers’ point of view, was added after the poem was written, cf.: G. Curcio, “*Il Cinegetico di Marco Olympio Nemesiano*”, RFIC 1899, vol. 27, p. 449.

of dragons with gaping mouths and shimmering teeth, flapping under the influence of the wind. They presented a magnificent view of fierce monsters in that way. The terror was intensified even more by the gust of wind, which when reaching the monstrous muzzle of the banner (to the gaping mouth of an animal acting as the head), generated a sound like hissing²⁴:

Signa micant Sinuatque truceS leviS aura draconeS.

“The signs are flickering and a gentle breeze is waving with dangerous dragons” (Nem. *Cyn.* 85)

The musical side of the imagination is perfectly started by the apostrophe to Diana, including verses 86–102 of the *Cynegetica*. The six-times usage of the consonant ‘s’ in the verse 86th inaugurates the invocation to the goddess of hunting. Furthermore, on the one hand, it strengthens and engages imagination in the field of hunting; on the other hand, it plays the role of a stylistic value, because it changes the style of the whole poem. The rustle of the forest is a sound context for a prayer addressed to the goddess of wild nature, whose visualization is an example of a masterful acoustic-visual landscape²⁵:

tu modo, quae SaltuS placidoS SilvaSque pererraS,

“You, who traverse the peaceful forests and woodlands.” (Nem. *Cyn.* 86)

The structure of the mentioned apostrophe is based on the composition of the ancient lofty apostrophe to Diana, which innumerable examples can be found in ancient literature²⁶. It is worth

²⁴ A. Kucz, E. Gryksa, *Nemezjan w kręgu antycznej tradycji łowieckiej*, Katowice 2019, pp. 69–70.

²⁵ The majesty of the goddess of hunting is shown in the apostrophe in an ekphrastic way displayed in the *Cynegetica prooemium*, cf. A. Kucz, *Visualizzazione nella poesia di Nemesiano*, Kraków 2022, pp. 69–82.

²⁶ Let us quote one of them: Sen. *Oed.* 253–4: *sororque fratri semper occurrens tuo, / noctivaga Phoebe*, “you, Febe, wandering at nights, what you go out / always to meet your brother” (Sapota, Słomak 2017). The authors called Diana in various

paying attention to a direct evocation to the reader, where the image of the “greedy sea vortex” (*avidō sectaris gurgite ponti*) was recalled by condensing the sound of ‘s’ and vibrating ‘r’, as well as the use of collusive alliteration. This is an evident metaphor of the growing chaos and unstable political and social situation in the 3rd century AD:

*huc igitur mecum, quiSquiS percuSSuS amore
venandi damnaS liteS pavidoSque tumultuS
civileSque fugiS StrepituS bellique fragoreS
nec praedaS avido SectariS gurgite ponti.*

“And wander with me if you are overwhelmed by the passion of hunting, if you condemn feuds, restless turmoil and avoid fratricidal fights or the turmoil of war, and you do not fight for conquest in the greedy sea vortex.” (Nem. *Cyn.* 99–102)

The abovementioned quotations create a kind of musical world in which there is an aura of elemental pathos and expression in accordance with the aesthetic and poetic categories in late poetry²⁷.

Conclusion

A receiver of the poem after reading or rather listening²⁸ to the phonetic procedures associated with the frequent occurrence of the sound ‘s’

ways. Oppian in the second book of his *Cynegetica* places an apostrophe to Artemis (16–41), which he calls “Febe of beautiful cubes” (*kallisphyre Phoibe*). More about the narrator’s dialogue with the fearful goddess of hunting vide: B. Burliga, *Nunc est venandum: dialog z Artemidą w prologu eposu dydaktycznego Kunhgetika ps.-Oppiana z Apamei*, in: *Epika antyczna i jej kontynuacje do XVIII*, ed. A. Witczak, Gdańsk 2015, pp. 221–242.

²⁷ J. Styka, *Sydoniusz Apollinaris i kultura literacka w Galii V wieku*. Kraków 2008, pp. 67–116.

²⁸ The ancient Roman was used to receiving an auditory text, so the poets took care of the quality of the sound layer to please one’s sensitive ear. Augustine was surprised to see Ambrosius reading quietly: *uox autem et lingua quiescebat* (*Vita sancti Ambrosia* 16 PL, Migne 1845). Nowadays, the sound layer is equally valuable due to the popularity of audiobooks and loud reading. Therefore, the authors are

in the prooemium has no doubt that the sigmatism in the Nemesianus' verses is an intended effect. It often makes the context more shocking with reference to the readers' feelings. The verses in which the density of 's' is especially visible, the author presents events characterized by special brutality. The repetition of 's' in each case can be considered expressive and demonstrating the poet's musical sensitivity. Nemesianus' expression, not without semantics, builds a sound layer in which the phonetic side is not isolated from the meaning in both a literal and metaphorical sense. The violation of the quantitative norm of the appearance of the phoneme 's' in the *prooemium* expressively depicts, above all, the struggle for power, gruesome scenes in which blood and naked lust triumph, as well as hunting practices and events.

When analysing *Cynegetica* one should remember that activities, which can be regarded as an expression of cruelty nowadays, were perceived in a different way in ancient times. However, it is possible that Carthaginian author spontaneously and subconsciously managed to transpose phonetically the obvious brutality associated with the bloody sport of killing for satisfaction of killing only.

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aware that the use of sound effects valorises the sound layer, which in turn enriches the message and thus has a greater impact on the recipient.

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Summary

Sigmatism in the *Prooemium* of Nemesianus' *Cynegetica*

Phonetic dramatization is an aesthetic procedure used in the late-classical poetics, which aimed at releasing various emotions "in the density of letters itself". The phenomenon of ancient sigmatism, i.e. the accumulation of consonants in a particular verse of a poem, is going to be outlined at the very beginning of this article. Then sound effects will be discussed, mainly those based on the analysis of sigmatism present in the *prooemium* of the treaty on hunting entitled *Cynegetica*. The abovementioned poem was written by Nemesianus, a Carthaginian poet living in the second half of the 3rd century AD. The article is an attempt to determine whether there is any connection between the phonetics and the meaning of the analysed poem. Moreover, the article's authors would like to answer the question if repeated use of 's' in particular verses of the *Cynegetica prooemium* proclaims negative events or shocking emotions.

Słowa kluczowe: sygmatyzm, aliteracja kolizyjna, Nemezjan, *Cynegetica*, *prooemium*

Key words: sigmatism, collusive alliteration, Nemesianus, *Cynegetica*, *prooemium*