

VERBAL PARALLELISMS AND ECHO EFFECT
IN NICANDER'S *ALEXIPHARMACA**

by

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ABSTRACT: The number of *dis legomena* in Nicander's *Theriaca* and *Alexipharmaca* adds up 530 in 1588 lines in total. Among them, there are doublets that appear in each of the poems, and others that join them together. Moreover, there are multiple similarly sounding words placed close to each other, which create a kind of echo effect. In this article, I claim that the technique of duplicating words comes from repetition, which in turn is a characteristic of oral tradition. However, it was reworked by Hellenistic poets, most importantly by Aratus, and then adapted and developed by others, including Nicander. Firstly, based on the introductory and ending lines of the *Alexipharmaca*, I discuss a wide spectrum of doubled words used in the poem, focusing on Nicander's dialogue with earlier literature. Secondly, I attempt to strengthen Enrico MAGNELLI's argument that the ending of the poem (611–628), believed to be spurious by Nicander's editors, is in fact authentic.

The purpose of this article is to present verbal parallelism as one of Nicander's poetic techniques. Most of the doublets he chose are rare words that appeared earlier in the works of Homer or doyens of Hellenistic poetry, namely Callimachus, Apollonius, Theocritus, Lycophron and Aratus who apparently used them for artistic reasons solely due to their rarity. However, there are also *prima dicta*, *dis legomena*, two variants of the same word of which one is a *hapax legomenon* (for instance a *hapax* λιχμήμων and a verb λιχμάομαι, Nic. *Alex.* 37, 569), being apparently Nicander's coinage that gives an interesting "twist" to the technique. There are also rare Homeric words or strictly scientific ones. Moreover, common words are frequently used in an unexpected sense, for example χολή: 'bile' as 'ink of a cuttle fish'. Additionally, there appear parallel phrases and even whole lines, and some doubled words are placed very close to each other.

All in all, there are more than 200 pairs of the same or cognate words in the *Theriaca* and more than 150 in the *Alexipharmaca*¹. The disproportion may be due to varying lengths of the poems (958 and 630 lines, respectively). There is also a considerable number (approximately 180) of parallel words that bond both epics

* I would like to thank the journal's two referees for their valuable comments.

¹ See Appendix I.