



A rhetorical (and stylistic) analysis of (Ps.)-Chrysostom's *De terrae motu*

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Abstract

The impact of Chrysostom's rhetorical training on his preaching and writings has consistently attracted the attention of scholars. Interestingly, Chrysostom himself denounced the use of empty rhetoric by Christian preachers who merely wanted to entertain the congregation by showing their eloquence, and who sought the approval of their audience (*Hom xxx in Acta*). However, Chrysostom also said that "Since we are weak, the sermon has to be embellished and full of diverse art, consisting of analogies, proofs, arrangements and periods, and many other similar things, so that we may choose from all these what will be profitable to us" (*De prophetiarum obscuritate* M56.45–51). In this paper I analyse the rhetorical (and stylistic) techniques in the homily "After the Earthquake" (*De terrae motu*). At the end I ask whether this homily could indeed be attributed to Chrysostom based on its rhetorical and stylistic features.

Keywords: Chrysostom, rhetoric, style, homilies, *De terrae motu*

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to describe the rhetorical and stylistic techniques in the short homily "After the Earthquake" (*De terrae motu*).¹ But let me first make a few comments about its authorship and provenance. Voicu (1996:107; 2008:83; 2016:602–604) often expressed the view that this homily could not be attributed to Chrysostom. Mayer (2005:27), on the other hand, believes that the style and vocabulary are indeed indicative of Chrysostom's authorship. Tillemont thinks that this homily was delivered at Constantinople (see Mayer 2005:63), but Montfaucon argues that Chrysostom delivered it at one of the churches outside the city of Antioch (see Mayer 2005:83). There is also very little information in the sermon that can help us to date it. Let us for now accept Chrysostom's authorship, though we can enjoy the rhetorical beauty of a work without knowing who the author is.

We do know that Chrysostom received his training in rhetoric from Libanius, a renowned pagan sophist (Thurén 2001:183). The impact of Chrysostom's rhetorical training on his preaching and writings has consistently attracted the attention of scholars. Interestingly, Chrysostom himself denounced the use of empty rhetoric by Christian preachers who merely wanted to entertain the congregation by showing their eloquence, and who sought the approval of their audience (*Hom xxx in Acta*). He also says, "I take no account of style or of delivery; yea let a man's diction be poor and his composition simple and unadorned, but let him not be unskilled in the knowledge and accurate statement of doctrine." (*De Sacerdotio* lib 4.6 – NPNF vol. 9, p. 67). However, Chrysostom also granted that "a certain amount of rhetorical artifice is justifiable" and said that "Since we are weak, the sermon has to be embellished and full of diverse art, consisting of analogies, proofs, arrangements and periods,

¹ The Greek text of this homily can be found in the *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 50, cols. 713–716. The translation of this homily was done by Bryson Sewell and can be accessed here: http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom_on_the_earthquake.htm.



and many other similar things, so that we may choose from all these what will be profitable to us" (*De prophetiarum obscuritate* M56.165.45–51).

But we also know that all the other Antiochene Fathers received a good rhetorical education (Young 1989:190) and that rhetorical handbooks such as that of Hermogenes of Tarsus played an important role in rhetorical training in the fourth and fifth centuries (Katos 2007:42; 59–60). Christian authors used all the rhetorical techniques that were available to them because they were good orators (Papageorgiou 1998:95; Thurén 2001:183). Kennedy (1980:145) says that Chrysostom and Gregory of Nazianzus "were so thoroughly imbued with figures of speech and devices of composition that these had become second nature to them."

But what do we understand under "rhetoric"? There are, of course, many workable definitions for "rhetoric" (see Lausberg 1998:17–18), but Heath (2004:373ff) gives us a very good guideline. He says that "Rhetoric is by definition concerned with the argument, structure and style of persuasive discourse...". He argues that "handbooks cannot (and do not attempt to) provide a full account of the skills exercised by a mature practitioner." He adds that "it is not enough simply to apply a set of labels out of a theoretical handbook, still less to coerce the text to a fixed schema." One should rather "give an account of the rationale of the compositional choices which the author has made."

De terrae motu is a short thematic homily which deals with the aftermath of an earthquake. It differs from many of Chrysostom's other homilies, which are exegetical and comprise verse-by-verse exposition, and which "he used primarily for the exegesis of Scripture" (Moreschini and Norelli 2005:158).

Latawiec (2017:57) says that though there are many scholarly studies on the style of Chrysostom's writings, "the investigation into the rhetorical structure of each homily has clearly not been a priority". So let us now look at the rhetorical techniques which were employed in this homily.

An analysis of *De terrae motu*

Emotive language

The ὑπόθεσις (purpose) of *De terrae motu* is clear (cf. Mitchell 2001:343): It deals with the after-effects of an earthquake on a community. In the *exordium* of the homily (see Lausberg 1998:121), the homilist addresses his congregation. It is interesting to see how much emotion there is in this part of the sermon. Chrysostom is using powerful emotive language to secure the goodwill of his audience (see Kennedy 1964:11) by praising his congregation and calling them a τὴν χορείαν τὴν πνευματικὴν ("a spiritual chorus") (M50.713.3). He also raises sympathy for himself because he is telling them that he is currently sick (M50.713.2–7). He actually got up from his bed to come to the church (M50.713.21). But Chrysostom is also referring to their own sacrifice, since they "are dripping with much sweat" (M50.713.4–5). He wants to build a positive relationship between him and his congregation, in order to persuade them. Chrysostom is probably delivering his sermon at one of the churches outside Antioch. That explains his allusion to the sweat and effort of the people who had to travel to this church to listen to the sermon (see Mayer 2005:83).

Though they are "weary", they are still prepared to listen to his sermon. Chrysostom also faced other obstacles, but he did not want to be absent from τοῦ περιπλέκεσθαι ὑμῶν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ("being entwined in your love") (M50.713.19). The strongest example of emotion that describes Chrysostom's relationship with the congregation is when he compares himself to a sick mother "who would prefer that her breast be stretched by her child, rather than to see him wasting away because of a famine" (M50.713.25–26). He even expresses his willingness "to strain his body for them" and even "to shed his own blood for them" (M50.713.27–28).



Chrysostom not only highlights his sacrifices for his congregation, and their positive relationship with him, but he also refers to their spiritual self-sacrifices in their relationship with God. He mentions how they triumph over the inferiorities of the body, the fact that they exhibit sleeplessness and their earnest fasting. Though it is true that Chrysostom's listing of the good qualities of his congregation does not necessarily constitute an *encomium* (in the classical sense of the word), the laudatory utterances do have encomiastic features (cf. Hubbell 1924). Athletes receive leaves of laurel as prizes, but Chrysostom regards his audience as his crown (M50.713.53–58). He values them to the extent that he says that “one of you as a hearer is equivalent to the city” (M50.714.2).

Parallelisms and antitheses

Kennedy (1980:145) says that “the style and mannerism of rhetoric are a part of his (Chrysostom's) nature, and he cannot resist flamboyant comparisons, jingles, and parallelisms”. Chrysostom often used parallelism when he made antithetical statements. The parallelism then highlighted the contrast. In this sermon Chrysostom compares, for example, the Christians in Antioch during the earthquake with Paul and Silas in Philippi when the prison was struck by an earthquake (Acts 16:25ff). Chrysostom says:

ἐκεῖνοι μὲν ἔψαλλον, καὶ τὸ δεσμωτήριον ἔσεισαν, a...b...a...b
ὑμεῖς δὲ ψάλλετε, καὶ σειομένην τὴν πόλιν ἔστήσατε. a...b...a...b
*(They [= Paul and Silas] sung psalms and shook the prison;
 you sung psalms, and made the city that was shaken firm)* (M50.716:1–2).

This parallel sentence structure makes the contrast between the two events even more striking: When Paul and Silas sang psalms, the prison shook, but when the citizens of Antioch sang psalms, they caused the city (shaken by the earthquake) to become firm!

Chrysostom also says:

οἱ ψάλλοντες ὑμῖν <u>ἀπέκαμον</u> , negative	...a] ←] ←] ←] ←
καὶ ὑμεῖς <u>νεάζετε</u> , positive	...b	
οἱ ψάλλοντες ὑμῖν <u>ἠτόνησαν</u> , negative	...a	
καὶ ὑμεῖς <u>ἐνευρώθητε</u> , positive	...b	

*(Those who were singing psalms to you grew weary,
 and you are renewed.
 Those singing psalms to you grew exhausted,
 and you were strengthened)* (M50.715.31–33).

The first two and the last two clauses form contrasting pairs. The first and third clauses are negative (“weary”, “exhausted”), while the second and fourth clauses are positive (“renewed”, “strengthened”). The parallel structure of the sentences (noun...verb) highlights the contrasting verbs:

ἀπέκαμον vs νεάζετε, and ἠτόνησαν vs ἐνευρώθητε.

A few lines below Chrysostom again uses contrasting sentences in a parallel structure to emphasise the point that the earthquake actually conveyed the same message that he had tried to convey with his sermons. He says:



Ἐγὼ σιωῶ
καὶ τὰ θεμέλια φθέγγεται·
ἐγὼ σιωπῶ
καὶ ὁ σεισμός σάλπιγγος λαμπροτέραν ἀφήισι φωνήν

silence
sound
silence
sound

*(I am silent
and the foundations send forth a sound
I remain silent
and the earthquake sends forth a voice more sonorous than a trumpet) (M50.714.49–51).*

The contrast between the impact of the rich (but wicked) people on the city and the impact of the congregation's virtue becomes evident in the following parallel sentences:

Ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ διὰ τῆς ἑαυτῶν κακίας τὴν πόλιν ἐσάθρωσαν, a..b..c..d
ὁμοῦ δὲ διὰ τῆς οἰκείας ἀρετῆς τὴν πόλιν ἐστήσατε. a..b..c..d

*(For they, on the one hand, through their own wickedness allowed the city to rot,
but you, through your own virtue, made the city firm) (M50.716.22–24).*

In the section below, Chrysostom says that the congregation forgets how tired they are when the sermon starts because they are captured by the message of the sermon. He makes two similar statements which are parallel in structure:

ἀλλ' ὁμοῦ τε ὁ λόγος ἐφάνη, a...b...c
καὶ ὁ πόνος ἀνεχώρησεν, d...e
ὁμοῦ τε ἡ διδασκαλία ἐφάνη, a...b...c
καὶ ὁ κόπος ἐδραπέτευσεν d...e

*(However, as soon as the sermon appeared,
your labour receded;
as soon as the teaching appeared,
your weariness fled) (M50.713.11–13).*

Note how lines 1 and 3 are parallel in structure and in meaning, while lines 2 and 4 are also parallel in structure and meaning.

Ring structure

Chrysostom also places antithetical sentences within a ring structure. In the following lines the opening and the closing phrases of the section consist of a call to the readers to take note of God's *φιλανθρωπίαν* ("love for humanity"). The opening phrase is in the form of a question, while the closing phrase is a command. Between these two lines Chrysostom discusses the fruit (benefits) of the earthquakes (ὁ καρπὸς ὁ ἀπὸ τῶν σεισμῶν) in terms of negative and positive activities:

Εἶδετε Δεσπότου φιλανθρωπίαν (Do you see the Master's love for humanity)

σειόντος πόλιν	NEG	(who shakes (the) city)
καὶ στηρίζοντος διάνοιαν;	POS	(and who makes (the) mind firm?)
σαλεύοντος θεμέλια,	NEG	(He who rocks (the) foundations)
καὶ πηγνύοντος φρονήματα;	POS	(and strengthens (our) thoughts?)
σαθρὰν ἐργαζομένου τὴν πόλιν,	NEG	(He who makes the city cracked)
καὶ ἰσχυροποιούντος τὴν γνώμην;	POS	(and makes our judgment strong?)

Ἐννόησον αὐτοῦ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν (Set your minds on His love for humanity) (M50.714.37).



Note how Chrysostom alternates between the negative and positive activities of God. All the negative sentences are about concrete matters (“shaking the city” / “rocking the foundations” / “making the cities cracked”). Note also the progression from “shaking” to “rocking” to “cracking”. All the positive sentences are metaphorical: “making the mind firm” / “strengthening thoughts” / “making judgments strong”).

The following lines again form a ring structure: The first two lines are structured chiasmatically (verb ... noun / noun ... verb) containing the antonyms *ὀλίγον* and *διηλεκῶς*, while the last two lines are parallel in structure again containing the antonyms *ὀλίγον* and *διηλεκῶς*. In the centre we again have two antithetical sentences: “for two days” / “into all time”:

<u>ἔσεισεν ὀλίγον,</u>	a.....b	
καὶ <u>διηλεκῶς ἐπηξεν:</u>	b.....a	
ὁ σεισμὸς εἰς <u>δύο ἡμέρας,</u>		
ἡ δὲ εὐλάβεια μενέτω εἰς <u>πάντα τὸν χρόνον:</u>		
πρὸς <u>ὀλίγον ἐλυπήθητε,</u>	a.....b	
ἀλλὰ <u>διηλεκῶς ἐρρίζωθητε.</u>	a.....b	

*(He shook for a little while
 He strengthened continuously
 The earthquake (lasted) for two days
 but let piety remain into all time
 You were distressed for a little while
 but you were rooted continuously)*
 (M50.714.42–45).

Imagery

Chrysostom uses images very effectively. Kennedy (1983:246–247) says that “One of the most evident qualities of John’s preaching is his imagery, found in metaphor and simile. Some is drawn from the Bible, some from everyday life.” Agricultural images, which have clear allusions to Biblical imagery, and which Chrysostom then expands with knowledge from everyday life, abound in this sermon. Chrysostom says “For I well know that ... your piety took root; and if an abatement should occur, the fruit remains. No longer are the thorn plants choking, nor an over-whelming rain washing away: the fear cultivated you well, it became an ally to my words.... then I give you to the sermon, lest the sermon should come to no effect; finding stones and thorn bushes springing up, I make the land clean, so that the sermon may scatter its seeds with a liberal hand.” (M50.714.45–715.6).²

Chrysostom also says that when the earthquake struck, everybody ran to the Church, which he describes as the τὸν λιμένα τὸν ἀκύμαντον, τὴν γαλήνην τὴν ἀπηλλαγμένην κυμάτων (MG 50.715.26–27) (*the waveless harbour, the calm that has been freed of waves*). If this sermon was indeed delivered at Antioch, the preacher probably compared the calmness of the Church with the waves (caused by the earthquake) in the harbour at Seleucia Pieria, which served as Antioch’s port. These two cities were connected by the Orontes river, which was used to carry cargo to Antioch (Norris 1992:265). This image is very powerful, since the Church was commonly referred to as a “harbour” in patristic writings. Ignatius also says in his *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* (11.3) that their prayers caused the Church at Antioch in Syria to become a safe harbour (cf. also Ignatius’ *Letter to Polycarp* 2.3).

² See, for example, Mt. 3:8; 13:1–9.



Rhetorical questions

Chrysostom often makes use of rhetorical questions to make a strong point. In the *exordium* of his homily, he praises his audience and asks:

*(For who would not gladly
shed even his own blood for you, men so ardent in piety,
so ardent in observance, who have shown
such repentance in a small space of time) (M50.713.27–30).*

The answer to the question is, of course, that Chrysostom himself would be willing to sacrifice his life for his congregation. Sometimes Chrysostom answers (*anthypophora*) his own questions (*hypophora*). In M50.715.7ff Chrysostom asks whether his congregation was in any way harmed by being grieved for a short time by the earthquake. He then immediately answers his own question and says that they actually benefited very much from the earthquakes, since they “became angels instead of humans”. He then substantiates his argument by pointing out that the earthquakes helped them to cast out envy, to get rid of slavish passions, to keep vigils, not to attend symposia, and he adds that instead of hearing licentious choruses in the theater, one could now hear the singing of psalms in the market-place.

He also asks where the rich were with their silken robes when the earthquake occurred, and where the gold was at that moment (M50.713.45–46). But then he again answers his own question and says they were nowhere to be seen! He also asks whose sins caused the earthquake, but he then also immediately answers that it was the sins of the rich people (M50.716.24–29).

A little bit later he again asks where the rich are, since they should learn the philosophy of the poor (M50.715.33–34). But again, he answers his own question and says that they are sleeping.

Anaphora

Chrysostom uses the same word at the beginning of several successive phrases to emphasise the sins of the rich that he believed caused the earthquake. He lists all the vices in a staccato style:

<u>διὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας,</u>	<i>(Because of sins,</i>
<u>διὰ τὰς πλεονεξίας,</u>	<i>because of acts of greed,</i>
<u>διὰ τὰς δικίας,</u>	<i>because of injustices,</i>
<u>διὰ τὰς παρανομίας,</u>	<i>because of acts of lawlessness,</i>
<u>διὰ τὰς ὑπερηφανίας,</u>	<i>because of acts of arrogance,</i>
<u>διὰ τὰς ἡδονῶν,</u>	<i>because of pleasures,</i>
<u>διὰ τὸ ψεῦδος.</u>	<i>because of deceit) (M50.716.26–28).</i>

Since all these short, compact phrases start with the same two words (examples of *anaphora*), they place the focus on the last word in each phrase. All these nouns have similar endings (-ας) (*homoioteleuton*), except for the very last word, ψεῦδος, which forms the climax of the list.

And then he asks a question consisting of one word only: τίνας δέ; (Whose?), in other words “whose sins caused the earthquake?” Chrysostom then gives the answer: τῶν πλουσίων (**the rich!**) (see the section under ‘rhetorical questions’).

Chrysostom then compares these misdeeds of the rich with the good deeds of the poor, and again he lists them one by one, and again we notice examples of *anaphora*:



διὰ τὰς ψαλμωδίας, (because of the singing of psalms,
διὰ τὰς εὐχάς, because of the prayers,
διὰ τὰς παννυχίδας. because of the vigils.

Ταῦτα δὲ τίνων; Whose are these?
 τῶν πενήτων. The poor) (M50.716.30–32).

Again, he asks who the doers of these good deeds are, and then he answers his own question by saying that these deeds were performed by **the poor** (see again the section under ‘rhetorical questions’).

The overwhelming sinfulness of the rich is illustrated by a list of seven sins. However, only three positive deeds of the poor could counterbalance these misdeeds and bring back stability to the city.

Words with the same ending (*homoioleuton*)

For more effect, Chrysostom also sometimes employs *homoioleuton* (words with similar endings), as in the following case:

ἀλλὰ καὶ μυρίων ἐτέρων κωλυμάτων γινομένων
 (but also in the face of countless other obstacles) (M50.713.18).

Anadiplosis

Anadiplosis “is the rhetorical repetition of one or several words” (Smyth 1972:673). Chrysostom uses the word πρόοδος (*advancement*) repeatedly to draw attention to how fear during the earthquake resulted in several benefits. He says:

τοῦ σεισμοῦ ἡ πρόοδος, πρόοδος μηδέποτε δαπανωμένη, πρόοδος ...
 This is the advancement of the earthquake, an advancement that is never spent up, an advancement...) (M50.713.41–42).

But note that the sentence continues as follows:

καὶ τοὺς πένητας εὐπορωτέρους ἐργαζομένη,	noun....verb]
καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους πλουτίζουσα	noun....verb	
οὐκ οἶδε πενίαν,	verb....noun]
οὐκ οἶδε πλοῦτον.	verb....noun	

(that makes even the poor rich,
 and enriches the wealthy.
 It does not know poverty,
 it does not know wealth) (M50.713.42–44).

Lines 1 and 2 above are parallel in structure, and lines 3 and 4 are also parallel in structure, but lines 1 and 3 are about poverty (πένητας and πενίαν), and lines 2 and 4 are about richness (πλουσίους and πλοῦτον). Since these antitheses have parallel structures, the contrast becomes even more evident. The brevity of lines 3 and 4 also places the words πενίαν and πλοῦτον closer to each other, which makes the contrast even clearer.



Comparison

Many comparisons can be found in this short sermon. The comparisons are introduced with words such as *καθάπερ* or *οὕτως*. Chrysostom says that just as a great stream of water overturns all things, the spiritual torrent cleansed away the mire of impiety in the city (M50.714.13–17).

Chrysostom adds that just as beasts lurk in dens, so the impious mind of the people was buried in the earth. Note again how the parallel construction highlights the comparison:

καθάπερ τὰ θηρία τὰ ἄγρια χειμῶνι φωλεύει, a...b...c...d
οὕτως ἡ δῖάνοια ἡ ἀσελγοῦσα κατορύπτεται a...b...c...d

*(Just as beasts in winter lurk in dens,
so his impious mind is buried in the earth)* (M50.714.22–24).

Chrysostom continues by saying that just as frost stiffens the bodies of serpents, so too the passions of the people were covered up as if into some abyss. The members of the congregation would be familiar with these images: they knew snakes lurk in dens, and they would grasp the message that Chrysostom was trying to convey through this image, namely that just as frost causes the body of a snake to become inactive, similarly God's Word renders the evil passions inactive.

Chrysostom compares the fragility and worthlessness of riches with a spider's web, saying that when the earthquake came, the silken robes of the rich "were torn asunder more easily than a spider's web" (M50.713.47).

Metaphors

Powerful metaphors are used in this homily: Chrysostom calls his congregation the towers (πύργοι), the wall (τείχος) and the security (ἀσφάλεια) of the city (M50.716.21–22). They are walls because they protect the city by means of their virtue, their singing of psalms, their prayers and their vigils. They are therefore also called the caretakers (κηδεμόνας) and the saviours (σωτήρας) of the city.

Realism

For greater effect, Chrysostom collapses the time-gap between the Scriptures and his congregation (cf. Young 1989:192), though he does not disregard its historical context (cf. Mitchell 2001:339). When Chrysostom's congregation sang psalms, they could hear God saying to Moses, "The place where you are standing is holy ground" (M50.714.9–11).

Anthropomorphism

Chrysostom attributes human traits to non-human entities. He says that the earthquake "speaks" to the congregation and tells them not to be scared, and that the earthquake's intention is merely to make the congregation "more exact" (ἀκριβεστέρους) (M50.714.54–56). The earthquake also "quoted" the words of Psalm 103:8: "The Lord is compassionate and merciful, patient and rich in mercy."

Hyperbole

Chrysostom makes use of exaggeration to emphasise his arguments in an attempt to make his congregation more favourably disposed towards him. He says he knows that his congregation exerted themselves to come to the Church. He then says, *πολλὰ τοῦ ἰδρωτός αἱ πηγαὶ* *The fountains of sweat are many* (M50.713.52).



Chrysostom also says to his congregation, “you measured out the market-place with your walking” (M50.714.5–11). This is to emphasise that they covered every inch of the market-place by walking while they were singing psalms. Moreover, he says that his congregation has made the air holy with their singing.

Word play

There are several instances of word play in this homily. Chrysostom, for example, plays with the different meanings of the word λύω. He says that God shook the prison to loosen (λύση) the jailor (see Acts 16:25ff). Chrysostom’s congregation, on the contrary, made the city firm with their psalms and in doing so they undid (λύσητε) God’s wrath (M50.716.4–8). In the latter instance λύω is used in the sense of “do away with” or “put an end to.”

He then continues to play with the two words ἄνω and κάτω, and says:

Ἄνωθεν ἡ ὀργή,
 καὶ κάτωθεν ὑμῶν ἡ φωνή·
 τὴν ἄνωθεν ῥέουσιν ὀργὴν ἢ κάτωθεν ἀναπεμπομένη φωνὴ ἀνέστειλεν.

(*The wrath is from above,
 your voice from below.*

The voice, sent up from below, restrained the wrath, flowing from above) (M50.716.11–14).

Chrysostom also plays with the two words τόπος and τρόπος, which look similar. He says to his congregation:

Ἄγγελοι ἀντὶ ἀνθρώπων ἐγένεσθε· (*You became angels instead of humans*
 πρὸς οὐρανὸν μετέστητε, *You were moved toward heaven*
 εἰ καὶ μὴ τῷ τόπῳ, *even if not in place*
 ἀλλὰ τῷ τρόπῳ. *at least in character*). (M50.715.7–9)

The use of the cognate accusative in the sentence, χορεῦσαι μεθ' ὑμῶν τὴν χορείαν τὴν πνευματικὴν (... celebrating with you the spiritual chorus...) (M50.713.1–2), can also be regarded as wordplay.

Catachrēsis

Chrysostom also makes use of *catachrēsis*. “Catachrēsis ...is the extension of the meaning of a word beyond its proper sphere” (Smyth, 1972:677). Earthquakes usually caused famine (see M50.713.22). Chrysostom now extends the meaning of the word λιμός to the congregation’s hunger for listening to God’s Word, and to the preacher’s hunger to teach God’s Word (M50.713.23–24). These two antithetical statements are again parallel in structure:

Ὡσπερ γὰρ ὑμῖν λιμός τὸ μὴ ἀκούειν, a...b...c...d
οὕτω καὶ ἐμοὶ λιμός τὸ μὴ λέγειν a...b...c...d

(*For just as it is a famine for you not to hear,
 so for me it is a famine not to speak*). (M50.713.23–24)



Periphrases

Chrysostom often uses excessive language to describe something very simple, but these periphrases are very powerful. Instead of saying, “I did not keep silent,” he said, “I did not bind my tongue in silence” (τῆ σιωπῆ τὴν γλῶτταν κατέδησα) (M50.713.9–10). Instead of saying that he decided not to stay away from the Church, he said, “I did not withdraw from being entwined in your love” (οὐκ ἀπέστην τοῦ περιπλέκεσθαι ὑμῶν τῆ ἀγάπῃ) (M50.713.19). These dynamic periphrases were much more forceful and colourful than the alternative shorter forms.

But at other times Chrysostom does exactly the opposite: The brevity of some other sentences gives impact to their meaning. Chrysostom says:

Ἠγιάσατε τὸ ἔδαφος, τὴν ἀγορὰν, a...b...b verb...noun...noun
τὴν πόλιν ἡμῖν ἐκκλησίαν ἐποίησατε. b...a...a noun...noun...verb

(*You sanctified the ground, the market-place,
you made our city a church*) (M50.714.11–13)

Rhetorical devices on a macro level

Many of these stylistic and rhetorical devices function on a micro level, but we should not lose sight of the devices that feature on the macro level of the text. The τάξις (“arrangement”) and ἀκολουθία (“argument line”) of the different sections in *De terrae motu* speak of the coherence and unity of the sermon (cf. Mitchell 2001:341).

The conclusion of a homily is called the *peroratio*, and its objective is to refresh the memory and to influence emotions (Lausberg 1998:204–205). Aristotle said that the *peroratio* should be a brief summary of the arguments in the preceding sections (Latawiec 2017:66). This homily, however, ends abruptly. Chrysostom merely says, “But let us end the sermon here, remaining in our vigils, our singing of psalms, sending glory up to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always, and into eternity” (M50.716.34–37). Perhaps Chrysostom decided to keep his sermon short because he was ill, as he had mentioned. Nevertheless, it adds to the vivacity, humanity and compassion of the sermon.

Conclusion

One should not forget that Chrysostom’s sermons were orations and were in the first place designed to be delivered orally (cf. Latawiec 2017:55-56). One would probably enjoy many of the stylistic devices even more were one to listen to the sermon (cf. Fairweather 1994:231). However, the first question that jumps to one’s mind is about the relationship between the written text and the delivered sermon. Mayer and Allen (2000:29–31) say that there is much debate about issues of composition and the editorial processes of the homilies. Cook (2019 e-book) believes that the text that we have is not necessarily a transcript of the text which was delivered as a sermon. He says that some of Chrysostom’s sermons were never meant to be preached. Cook adds that a text that looks like a sermon is not necessarily a sermon; some sermons were based on sermons which were indeed delivered, while others were prepared to be delivered. Some texts were probably based on his own notes, while others were based on the notes of other people (such as stenographers). Cook says that it is impossible to know what the audience and the social context of each sermon was. I assume that some sermons were also preached more than once, and in different contexts, and that these sermons differed from one occasion to another. It is therefore very difficult to determine what the delivered text looked like.

We do know that Chrysostom was a powerful and eloquent preacher, and therefore we can assume that the sermons that he delivered were of high quality. It therefore needs not surprise



us that this sermon abounds with stylistic and rhetorical devices. However, in the light of Chrysostom's reservations about the excessive use of these techniques, one may be inclined to consider that Chrysostom is NOT the author of this sermon. Mayer (2005:27) argues that the style and vocabulary of this homily are indicative of Chrysostom's authorship. Does the extravagant use of stylistic devices not perhaps indicate to us that Chrysostom is NOT the author?

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