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Appropriating Peri hypsous : interpretations and creative adaptations of Longinus' Treatise On the Sublime in Early Modern Dutch Scholarship
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CHAPTER THREE

FIAT LUX

SUBLIME SIMPLICITY IN DUTCH BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

3.1 Introduction

The paraphrase of Genesis 1.3-9 in *Peri hypsous* 9.9 is certainly one of the most intriguing examples adduced in Longinus' treatise. The appearance of a reference to Scripture in a treatise that is primarily concerned with classical Greek literature and probably written by a pagan, as well as the textual form and argumentative function of the example have fascinated readers for ages.¹ In the late seventeenth

¹ The earliest discussion of (the authenticity of) the passage is found in the commentary to *Peri hypsous* of Franciscus Portus (first published by Zacharias Pearce in 1733). Discussions of the place and meaning of the passage in *Peri hypsous* and its ancient context include K. Ziegler 'Das Genesiszitat in der Schrift ΠΕΡΙ ΥΨΟΥΣ', *Hermes* 50 (1915), 572-603, H. Mutschmann, 'Das Genesiszitat in der Schrift ΠΕΡΙ ΥΨΟΥΣ', *Hermes* 52 (1917), 161-200, E. Norden, 'Das Genesiszitat in der Schrift Vom Erhabenen', in: *Abhandlungen der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur und Kunst* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1954), 5-23, Russell (1964), 92-4, M.L. West, 'Longinus and the Grandeur of God', in: D.C. Innes, H. Hine, and C. Pelling (eds.), *Ethics and Rhetoric. Classical essays for Donald Russell on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 335-342, M.D. Usher, 'Theomachy, Creation, and the Poetics of Quotation in Longinus Chapter 9', *Classical Philology* 102 (2007), 292-303, Mazzucchi (2010), 174-77, De Jonge (2012), and Porter (2016), 107-16. The early modern reception of Longinus' Genesis citation is discussed by Till (2006 and 2012), Saint-Girons (1993), 43-49, G. Declercq, 'Boileau-Huet: la querelle du Fiat Lux', in: S. Guellouz (ed.), *Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630-1721). Actes du colloque de Caen (12-13 November 1993)* (Paris: Biblio, 1994), 237-262, T.A. Litman, 'The sublime as a source of light in the works of Boileau', *Analecta Husserliana* 38 (1992), 111-119, Kerslake (2000), 41-63, A. Ossa-Richardson, 'Sublimity as Resistance to Literary Form in the Early Modern Bible', in: Prickett, S.

century Longinus' citation of the *Fiat Lux* became the focal point in a fierce scholarly debate, which is nowadays known as *La Querelle du Fiat Lux*.² Nicolas Boileau and the biblical scholars Pierre-Daniel Huet and Jean Le Clerc disputed over the question whether the Mosaic account of the creation of light could be called 'sublime'. Longinus' citation of Genesis emerged from the debate as an example of 'sublimity through simplicity'.³ It has been argued that Boileau's critical essays from that period, by emphasising the importance of simplicity in Longinus' argument, brought out a hitherto overlooked aspect of *Peri hypsous*.⁴ Lawrence Kerslake and James Porter however pointed out that *Peri hypsous* itself does not present simplicity as an aspect of the sublime, and argued that this interpretation is to be regarded as a modification of Longinus' theory on the part of Boileau.⁵ The *Fiat Lux* became the epitome of simplicity in Longinus' theory and influenced interpretations of *Peri hypsous* ever since.⁶ While Boileau's critical essays played an important role in diffusing the idea that simplicity is an essential aspect of the Longinian sublime (a topic recurrent in modern scholarship on Longinus as well), the first appearance of this idea however long predates the *Querelle du Fiat Lux*. The present chapter will show how early seventeenth-century scholars already proposed the idea that Longinus' citation of Genesis connected sublimity

(ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to the Bible and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 69-87, Doran (2015), 115-120, and Lazarus (2019, forthcoming). John of Sicily's alleged reference to Longinus' *Fiat Lux* is discussed by Mazzucchi (1990), and I. Männlein-Robert, *Longin: Philologe und Philosoph. Eine Interpretation der erhaltenen Zeugnisse* (München: Saur Verlag, 2001), 599-608.

² Declercq (1994), 237-262 and Kerslake (2000), 41-63 provide insightful, chronological reconstructions of the *Querelle*. C. Henn, *Simplizität, Naivetät, Einfalt. Studien zur ästhetischen Terminologie in Frankreich und in Deutschland 1674-1771* (Diss. Zürich, 1974), 1-35 reflects on the meanings of 'simplicity' in the *Querelle du Fiat Lux*.

³ The *Querelle* will be discussed in more detail in section 3.4.

⁴ An extensive list of modern scholars adhering to this idea is given by Porter (2016), 107-116. To his list of examples may be added Brody (1958), 91: "Simplicity is not merely a characteristic of the Sublime: it is its essence" and Saint-Girons (1993), 232: "La révolution longinienne consistera (...) dans la suppression de l'opposition traditionnelle entre simple et sublime, ou, plus exactement, dans la réhabilitation de la simplicité, non pas à côté du sublime, mais en son coeur même."

⁵ See Kerslake (2000), 41-63 and Porter (2016), 107-116.

⁶ For a brief discussion and overview of 18th-century critics commenting on Longinus' *Fiat Lux*, see F. de Bruyn, 'Fiat Lux', in: D.L. Jeffrey (ed.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 275-278. James Porter (2016), 36-51 discusses the importance given to the idea of 'simplicity' in modern Longinian scholarship.

with simplicity, a shift that is also visible in Daniel Heinsius' use of *Peri hypsous* in his *Prolegomena* on Hesiod (see Chapter Two).

The *Querelle du Fiat Lux* was shaped against the background of biblical scholarship, a field that had discovered – and exploited – Longinus' praise of Scripture already more than half a century earlier, as Longinus' reference to Genesis had sparked the interest of (biblical) scholars as early as the first decade of the 17th century. The purpose of this chapter is to explore what occasioned the early modern interpretation of Longinus' quotation of Genesis as an example of 'sublime simplicity', and to reconstruct this development over the course of the seventeenth century. Section 3.2 will discuss Longinus' citation of Genesis in the context of the treatise and examine some of its significant characteristics. Section 3.3 will discuss the earliest reception of Longinus' citation of Genesis and explore how biblical scholarship influenced interpretations of Longinus' *Fiat Lux* already in the first decades of the seventeenth century, especially in the works of Hugo Grotius and Daniel Heinsius. Section 3.4 will investigate the interpretative shift that took place during the *Querelle du Fiat Lux* and shed light on the contributions to the *Querelle* from the field of biblical scholarship. This chapter will thus demonstrate how the popular interpretation of Longinus' praise of Genesis as an example of 'sublime simplicity' was in fact rooted in early seventeenth-century (Dutch) biblical scholarship.

3.2 The reference to Genesis in *Peri hypsous* 9

From the sixteenth century onwards scholars have speculated about the function and authenticity of Longinus' reference to Genesis in *Peri hypsous* 9.9. Some have earmarked it as a later interpolation; others have used it to make claims about the background of the author of the treatise, or discussed its correspondence to the overall argument of *Peri hypsous* 9.⁷ The present section will give an overview of

⁷ Franciscus Portus questioned the authenticity of the passage in his commentary on *Peri hypsous* (published in 1733 by Zacharias Pearce), as did Ziegler (1915). Mutschmann (1917) and Norden (1954), 5-23 argued that a pagan writer might well have known a passage from Scripture. West (1995), 335-342, Usher (2007) and De Jonge (2012) have moreover contributed to our understanding of the argumentative function of the passage in *Peri hypsous*.

the scholarship on Longinus' citation of Genesis and highlight some of its most important features.

3.2.1 Textual form and authenticity

The example appears in the context of Longinus' discussion of 'greatness of thought' (the first source of sublimity, which is covered in chapters 9-15 of the treatise), amidst examples from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

ταύτη καὶ ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεσμοθέτης, οὐχ ὁ τυχῶν ἀνὴρ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐχώρησε καὶ ἐξέφηεν, εὐθὺς ἐν τῇ εἰσβολῇ γραψας τῶν νόμων “εἶπεν ὁ Θεός”, φησί, —τί; “γενέσθω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο· γενέσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγένετο.”⁸

So too, the lawgiver of the Jews [Moses], not just any man, after he had formed a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it, writing at the very beginning of his Laws, declared: “God said”- what? “Let there be light,’ and there was light, ‘Let there be earth’, and there was earth.”

Although the passage is presented as a citation, it is in fact a paraphrase of the first verses of Genesis. The structure of Longinus' version differs substantially from the Scriptural text, compared for instance to the Greek text of the Septuagint.⁹

1. Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. 2. ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἄόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, καὶ σκότος ἐπάνω τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος. 3. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός Γενηθήτω

⁸ Longinus, *Peri hypsous* 9.9.

⁹ The text of the Septuagint is included for comparison, but Longinus did not necessarily take his reference from the Septuagint, as other Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible were also circulating in the first centuries AD. See N. Fernández Marcos and W.G.E. Watson, *The Septuagint in context: introduction to the Greek version of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 109-173. See Mazzucchi (2010), 174 for a discussion of the textual differences between the Septuagint and Longinus' version. Slight or even major modifications to cited passages are not uncommon in *Peri hypsous*. See especially Usher (2007) on Longinus' methods of citation. See Porter (2016), 107-114 on Longinus' emphatic interjection τί; in the middle of the citation.

φῶς. καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς. (...) 9. Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός Συναχθήτω τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ὑποκάτω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εἰς συναγωγὴν μίαν, καὶ ὀφθήτω ἡ ξηρά. καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως. καὶ συνήχθη τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ὑποκάτω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς αὐτῶν, καὶ ὤφθη ἡ ξηρά. 10. καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὁ θεός τὴν ξηρὰν γῆν καὶ τὰ συστήματα τῶν ὑδάτων ἐκάλεσεν θαλάσσας. καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεός ὅτι καλόν.¹⁰

1. In the beginning God made the sky and the earth. 2. Yet the earth was invisible and unformed, and darkness was over the abyss, and a divine wind was being carried along over the water. 3. And God said, "Let light come into being." And light came into being. (...) 9. And God said, "Let the water that is under the sky be gathered into one gathering, and let the dry land appear." And it became so. And the water that was under the sky was gathered into their gatherings, and the dry land appeared. 10. And God called the dry land Earth, and the systems of the waters he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.¹¹

A striking departure from the text of Genesis is the parallellism that Longinus constructed in his paraphrase of God's creation of light (Gen. 1.3) and earth (Gen. 1.9-10).¹² In his paraphrase, Longinus compressed the events of the creation into one formula: "God said: 'let there be [x], and there was [x].'"¹³ Another remarkable

¹⁰ [LXX] Genesis 1-10; text: A. Rahlfs (ed.), *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Württemberg Bible Society, 1935 [9th edn.]).

¹¹ Translation: R.J.V. Hiebert, 'Genesis', in: Pietersma, A., Wright, B.G. (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹² This parallellism may also have been inspired by Genesis 1.1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν); the sequence 'heaven' – 'earth' (Gen. 1.1) could have prompted the construction of the parallellism 'light' – 'earth' in *Peri hypsous* 9.9 from Genesis 1.3 and 1.9-10.

¹³ This compressed formula is also found in the commentary to Hermogenes' *Περὶ ἰδεῶν* by John of Sicily (10th-11th century), which also refers to a 'Longinus'. On this passage see Mazzucchi (1990), Männlein-Robert (2001), and section 3.3.1 below. Quite intriguing parallels for this way of citing Genesis are found in Augustine and in the apocryphal books of Ezra. In *De Genesi ad litteram* 1.13, wondering when the creation of water and earth took place exactly, Augustine asks: *Cur non scriptum est: Dixit Deus: Fiat terra, et facta est terra; item: Dixit Deus: Fiat aqua; et facta est aqua; vel utrumque communiter, si una quasi lege loci infimi continentur: Dixit Deus: Fiat terra et aqua, et sic factum est?* ("Why

feature of the biblical verses as they appear in *Peri hypsous* is Longinus' emphatic – and interrupting – insertion of the words “[Moses] declared” (φησί) and “what?” (τί;) right in the middle of his quotation.¹⁴

Serious doubts about Longinus' quotation of Genesis were already put forward in the 16th century. Franciscus Portus noted in his commentary to *Peri hypsous* that the reference to Genesis must have been inserted into the text at a later stage.¹⁵ Modern scholars too debated the authenticity of the reference. In 1915, Konrat Ziegler argued that the inclusion of a reference to Scripture in a text on Greek classical literature addressed to a Greek pupil – and as early as the 1st century AD – is very unlikely, and that the example breaks up the series of examples from

do we not read, “God said: ‘Let there be earth,’ and earth was made”; and “God said: ‘Let there be water,’ and water was made”? Or, if the whole lower order of creation was included in one act, the sacred text might have read: “God said: ‘Let there be earth and water,’ and so it was done””). Text: J. Zycha, *Sancti Aureli Augustini De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim, eiusdem libri capitula; De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber; Locutionum in Heptateuchum libri septem* (Vienna: Tempsky, 1894), translation: J.H. Taylor (trans.), *The Literal Meaning of Genesis. Ancient Christian Writers 41-42* (New York: Newman Press, 1982). See also Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 11.34. A similar parallelism is also found in 6 Esdras 55-56: *ecce Dominus cognoscit omnia opera hominis et adinventiones illorum et cogitatum illorum et corda illorum. qui dixit: fiat terra, et facta est, fiat caelum, et factum est.* (“Behold, the Lord knows all the actions of a person, and their designs and their intention and their hearts. He (is the one) who said, “Let there be earth,” and it appeared; “Let there be sky,” and it appeared”). Text and translation: T.A. Bergren, *Sixth Ezra: The Text, Origin and Early History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998).

¹⁴ The syntax of the whole sentence is complex, and in any case the combination of “writing... [Moses] declared” (γράφας ... φησί) seems redundant (Porter, 2016, 109). I take φησί, following Mazzucchi and Porter, to refer to Moses introducing God's utterance (and not to God's utterance itself). See Russell (1964), 92-93, Mazzucchi (2010), 174 and Porter (2016), 109-11 for a discussion of the syntactic complexity of the sentence. According to Porter, Longinus thus heightens the anticipation of his readers and draws attention to the textual structure of God's utterance (Porter, 2016, 111).

¹⁵ Franciscus Portus in: Pearce (1733), 301: *Hic locus est mihi suspectus admodum. Non constat mihi Longinum Christianum fuisse; itaque verisimile mihi est, eum non fuisse versatum in Sacris Literis, nec usurum fuisse exemplis Christianis. Suspicio itaque aliquem Monachum inter legendum addidisse de suo hoc exemplum in margine, librarium deinde imperitum ex margine in codicis contextum transtulisse. Haec est mea suspicio; iudicium tamen liberum omnibus relinquo.* “I find this passage highly suspicious. To me it is all but certain that Longinus was a Christian; hence it seems likely to me that he was not versed in the Holy Scripture, and that he would not have used Christian examples. I therefore suspect that some monk, while reading, has added this example on his own in the margin, and that an ignorant librarian has inserted it in the main text of the book. That is my suspicion; yet I leave the matter open for all to judge.”

Homer's works adduced in chapter 9 of *Peri hypsous*.¹⁶ Ziegler's article was soon followed by a study of Hermann Mutschmann that systematically refuted Ziegler's arguments and which broke a lance for the coherence of the argument in *Peri hypsous* 9. Mutschmann concluded (quite boldly) that the passage should be seen as a first step in the broader appreciation of Scripture and thus of the global advent of Christianity.¹⁷ Eduard Norden in turn argued that a pagan writer of the first century may well have known Scripture as a result of cultural and intellectual contact in the first centuries AD, a view that is also held by Russell and Stern, and reinforced by Van Kooten.¹⁸ De Jonge has moreover argued that the religious terminology used by Longinus ties in very well with the ideas of other first-century critics, such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus.¹⁹

The presence of a reference to Genesis has led scholars to situate the author of *Peri hypsous* in a Jewish context. It has been pointed out that the Suda refers to Caecilius of Caleacte, Longinus' predecessor and target, as a Jew, and that the reference to Genesis could therefore have been borrowed from Caecilius' lost treatise on the sublime.²⁰ Goold has suggested that Longinus himself was "in some sense a Jew."²¹ Stern however argued that it is unnecessary to assume that the author of *Peri hypsous* was Jewish, and points out that the writer refers to his own 'Greekness' several times in the treatise.²² Van Kooten moreover argued that the

¹⁶ Ziegler (1915).

¹⁷ Mutschmann (1917).

¹⁸ Norden (1954), 19-23; Russell (1964), 94; M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism. Vol. 1: From Herodotus to Plutarch* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1976), 361-3; G.H. Van Kooten, 'Moses/Musaeus/Mochos and his God Yahweh, Iao, and Sabaoth, seen from a Graeco-Roman perspective', in: G.H. van Kooten (ed.), *The revelation of the name YHWH to Moses: Perspectives from Judaism, the pagan Graeco-Roman world, and early Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 107-138: 129. Norden's study connects Longinus with the circle of Philo Judaeus, and suggests that the anonymous philosopher whose arguments are presented in *Peri hypsous* 44 could be identified with Philo.

¹⁹ De Jonge (2012), 276-289.

²⁰ Suda κ 1165 (s.v. Κεκίλιος). This argument is put forward for instance by Russell (1999), 190-1 and Innes (2002), 275.

²¹ G.P. Goold, 'A Greek Professorial Circle at Rome', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 92 (1961), 168-192: 177.

²² Stern (1976), 361-3. An emphasis on 'Greekness' however does not preclude a Jewish background, as for instance in the case of the author Philo Judaeus. On Longinus' adherence to the Greek classical tradition see also Whitmarsh (2001), 68-69, and De Jonge (2014), 398-407.

figure of Moses was quite well known in the Graeco-Roman world.²³ The scholarly consensus now seems to be that the author of *Peri hypsous* was a pagan, possibly (but not necessarily) with some connection to Jewish intellectual circles, and that he was active in the 1st century AD.²⁴ As we will see, questions of authenticity and the cultural background of the author also fuelled the 17th-century debates about Longinus' *Fiat Lux*.

3.2.2 Representations of 'the divine'

The question of the coherence of the argument presented in chapter 9 of *Peri hypsous* has been taken on by Martin West and by Mark Usher, who have argued that the citations adduced in chapter 9 of his treatise, including the quotation of Genesis, form a consistent series of examples that illustrate the literary expression of 'divinity'. West argued that the citations in *Peri hypsous* 9 form a cluster of creation myths that have a common origin in the Near Eastern mythological tradition. Usher, building on West's article, has elucidated the intertextual links between the quotations in *Peri hypsous* 9, thus uncovering a coherent train of thought that binds all examples together.²⁵

What function does the biblical example serve in the context of *Peri hypsous* 9? The ninth chapter of the treatise belongs to Longinus' discussion of 'great thoughts', the first and most important source of the sublime.²⁶ The chapter can be roughly divided into three sections.²⁷ In 9.1-4 Longinus explains how great thoughts constitute the primary criterion for sublimity.²⁸ After a lengthy lacuna the remainder of section 9.4 and sections 9.5-11 illustrate 'great thoughts' by discussing various passages from Homer and the citation of Genesis. In sections 9.11-15 the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are compared. In the series of predominantly Homeric examples that appear in *Peri hypsous* 9.4-11 the reference to Genesis certainly

²³ Van Kooten (2006), 129.

²⁴ See also my Introduction on the dating of *Peri hypsous*.

²⁵ West (1995), 335-342; Usher (2007).

²⁶ Longinus presents his five sources of the sublime in *Peri hypsous* 8.1. See Russell (1981), 72-86, Innes (1995a), and Porter (2016), 60-83 on the structure of Longinus' treatise and the role his five sources of the sublime. See also Chapter Two (section 2.2) for a brief discussion of this element of *Peri hypsous*.

²⁷ I follow the division as proposed by Russell (1999), 150.

²⁸ *Peri hypsous* 9.2: ὕψος μεγαλοφροσύνης ἀπήχημα ("sublimity is the echo of a noble mind").

stands out. What binds these passages together, however, is that they all represent a manifestation of divine power. Longinus presents his readers with passages that illustrate, consecutively, the supernatural size of the goddess Eris, the revolting image of Achlys (the personification of 'gloom' – a counterexample; *Peri hypsous* 9.5: Ps.-Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles* 267), the striding horses of heaven (*Peri hypsous* 9.5: Hom. *Il.* 5.770-2), the Battle of the Gods (*Peri hypsous* 9.6: Hom. *Il.* 21.388, 20.61-5; and *Peri hypsous* 9.8: Hom. *Il.* 13.18, 20.61, 13.19, 13.27-9), the creation of light and earth (*Peri hypsous* 9.9: [LXX] *Gen.* 1.3, 9-10), Ajax' prayer for light (*Peri hypsous* 9.10: Hom. *Il.* 17.645-7), and the raving War-god Ares (*Peri hypsous* 9.11: Hom. *Il.* 15.605).

The stature of Eris (9.4) and the great leap of the horses of heaven (9.5) illustrate a typically sublime feature: supernatural magnitude.²⁹ The passage taken from the *Shield* serves as a counterexample: the repulsive description of Achlys (9.5) is anything but lofty.³⁰ The conflated passage in 9.6 depicts the Battle of the Gods (Theomachy), and the earth-shaking force of Poseidon. Longinus however remarks that although the passages from Homer's Theomachy are very powerful, they "are utterly irreligious and do not follow the rules of propriety, unless they are taken allegorically" as Homer has made the gods look too human-like in his depictions (9.7). Longinus continues with an example that in his eyes "represents the divine in its true nature: as something undefiled, great and pure": a depiction of Poseidon, shaking the woods and travelling over the parting waves (9.8), followed by the Biblical creation of light and earth (9.9).³¹ The theme of 'light' recurs in connection with heroism in the next passage (9.10), which portrays Ajax in his darkest hour praying to Zeus for daylight. The raving War-god Ares in the next example (9.11) is in itself a depiction of divine power, but is used by Longinus to illustrate the force of Homer's writing.³²

The examples that Longinus adduced to illustrate his first source of the sublime thus centre on several themes: supernatural size, the power of the gods, light and

²⁹ De Jonge (2012), 278. The quotation of the passage about Eris has disappeared for the most part in the lacuna in 9.4, but Longinus' remarks make it clear that the passage referred to is Hom. *Il.* 4.442.

³⁰ Russell (1964), xv.

³¹ Usher (2007), 299 has pointed out that the parting of the waves in the example from 9.8 may have triggered an association with Moses' parting of the Red Sea in Exodus.

³² De Jonge (2012), 281.

darkness, and the inspiration of the author.³³ Porter recently argued that most of these passages also express the idea of a cosmic void.³⁴ The example from Genesis appears to fit its immediate context very well, as it combines most of these themes. Longinus presents Moses as an inspired author, calling him “not just any man” (οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ), and one who has “formed a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it”.³⁵ The creation of light and earth – the universe – invokes a sense of vastness, while the aspect of divine power as well as light and darkness are omnipresent in the citation.³⁶

The *Fiat Lux* and its surrounding examples thus illustrate various majestic subjects or ideas. Within the context of Longinus’ discussion of ‘greatness of thought’, emphasis is placed on subject matter, while aspects of style are largely left out. This is however not necessarily an indication that dignified expression could not play a role in creating sublimity, or that Longinus meant to designate Moses’ words as ‘simple’.³⁷ One could however say that Longinus does leave room for such an interpretation. The citation is made up of quite ordinary words and short sentences. At the same time, the spondaic rhythm, created by the long syllables in γενέσθω φῶς ... γενέσθω γῆ, as well as the parallelism in the citation may be regarded as stylistic characteristics that confer greatness.³⁸ Throughout *Peri hypsous* Longinus does not (explicitly) present simplicity as an aspect of his

³³ See especially De Jonge (2012), 277-80 for a discussion of the themes of the divine and the inspired author in *Peri hypsous* 9 and Innes (1995a), 117-119 for a discussion of the imagery of ‘light’ in *Peri hypsous*.

³⁴ Porter points out that Eris’ supernatural size is *measured* and that it is this interval that amazes the reader. Likewise the spatial gap of the giant leap of the horses of heaven, the parting of the waves, the separation of light from shadow, even the insertion of τί; (“what?”) into the quotation of Genesis are meant to invoke a sense of emptiness and vastness; see Porter (2016), 161-70.

³⁵ De Jonge (2012), 279.

³⁶ Porter (2016), 160-73.

³⁷ Porter argued that Longinus probably presented the *Fiat Lux* just as much for its literary and rhetorical qualities as for its inherent greatness: “Longinus is concerned to describe the poetics of divinity, not divinity tout court” (Porter, 2016, 112).

³⁸ See moreover Porter (2016), 107-114 on Longinus’ emphatic insertion of τί; (‘what?’) in the middle of the citation. Dionysius of Halicarnassus categorises spondees as rhythms that confer grandeur and dignity in *De compositione verborum* 18, while Hermogenes associates them with his category of ‘solemnity’ (σεμνότης). See C.C. De Jonge, *Between Grammar and Rhetoric: Dionysius of Halicarnassus on Language. Linguistics and Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 346, and Wooten (1987), 24 and 26.

concept of the sublime.³⁹ His description of Hyperides as talking ‘plainly’ (μετὰ ἀφελείας), and having the ability to portray a character with ‘charm’ (γλυκύτης) and ‘simplicity’ (λιτός) in *Peri hypsous* 34.2, for instance rather points at the opposite: Hyperides’ polished style is contrasted with Demosthenes’ chaos and forcefulness, to the end of presenting Demosthenes as an example of a flawed but sublime genius, and Hyperides as a perfect but mediocre writer.⁴⁰ As James Porter has argued, early modern interpretations of Longinus’ quotation of the *Fiat Lux* have been the main driver behind the emphasis on simplicity in Longinus’ theory of sublimity, even though the treatise itself does not make this connection.⁴¹ In section 3.3 of this chapter I will elaborate on this point, and show that the emphasis on (divine, majestic) subject matter that underlies Longinus’ quotation of Genesis, to some extent invited the characterisation of the passage as an example of ‘sublime simplicity’ in early modern scholarship.

Despite its curious textual form and debated origins, the Genesis example does fit into the overall structure and meaning of *Peri hypsous* 9.9. Nevertheless, even if one fully accepts its place in the treatise, the passage inevitably stands out amidst the surrounding Homeric examples. As we have seen, the peculiarity of the passage has prompted scholars to either explain or denounce its presence in *Peri hypsous*. The conspicuousness of the example may however constitute an essential part of its illustrative function. The Genesis citation, being a passage taken from beyond the realm of the familiar, illustrates that the sublime is so self-evident and overwhelming that a reader would even recognise ‘greatness of thought’ in a text that does not belong to the canon of his or her own cultural tradition.⁴²

³⁹ The inherent grandeur of the ‘bare thought’ (ψιλὴ ἔννοια) of Ajax’s silence in the *Odyssey* (*Peri hypsous* 9.2) as well as the use of ‘ordinary words’ (κοινὰ ὀνόματα, *Peri hypsous* 40.2), could be regarded as pointing towards an element of ‘simplicity’ in Longinus’ theory. As we will see in section 3.3 Longinus’ criticism of ‘tumidity’ and like faults in *Peri hypsous* 3-5 was interpreted by early modern scholars as a plea for simplicity.

⁴⁰ Porter also points at Longinus’ remarks in *Peri hypsous* 18.1: “Stated simply (ἀπλῶς ῥηθέν) [i.e., without rhetorical artifice, here that of a figure], the matter would have been much inferior” (Porter, 2016, 116n.139).

⁴¹ See also Porter (2016), 114-116.

⁴² West (1995), 338. Cf. Longinus’ view about the universal nature of the sublime in *Peri hypsous* 7.4: ὅλως δὲ καλὰ νόμιζε ὕψη καὶ ἀληθινὰ τὰ διὰ παντὸς ἀρέσκοντα καὶ πᾶσιν. ὅταν γὰρ τοῖς ἀπὸ διαφόρων ἐπιτηδευμάτων βίων ζήλων ἡλικιῶν λόγων ἔν τι καὶ ταῦτὸν ἅμα περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἄπασι

3.3 The Praise of a Pagan

Longinus' reference to Genesis is signposted in various ways in early modern editions of the treatise. Robortello's 1554 *editio princeps* of Longinus' text indicates the Genesis citation in *Peri hypsous* with a marginal note: *Laudat Moisen Judaeorum Legumlatorem, quod de DEO honorifice sit locutus* ("He [Longinus] praises Moses, the Lawgiver of the Jews, because he has spoken magnificently about God").⁴³ Portus' 1569 edition (which incorporates most of Robortello's notes), includes an index term that is very similar to Robortello's note: *Moses Judaeorum Legislator laudatur, quod de Deo honorifice sit locutus*.⁴⁴ In his commentary (ca. 1581) Portus casts doubt on the authenticity of the Biblical reference in *Peri hypsous*.⁴⁵ Portus speculates that the quotation may be a later interpolation, as he finds it unlikely that a non-Christian author would use an example from Scripture. From the late sixteenth century onwards the passage is discussed in rhetorical theory and biblical scholarship. It appears in Johannes Caselius' edition of Demetrius' treatise *On Style*, and in the rhetorical compendia of Gerardus Joannes Vossius, Bartholomeus Keckermann and Nicolas Caussin, as well as in the biblical scholarship of Isaac Casaubon, Daniel Chamier, Hugo Grotius, and Daniel Heinsius. In addition, biblical scholarship plays a role in the 1612 edition of Longinus' treatise by Gabriele De Petra. In the present section I will first discuss the alledged reference to *Peri hypsous* 9.9 in the work of the Byzantine scholar John of Sicily, and then examine the appearances of Longinus' citation in early modern rhetoric and biblical scholarship.

δοκῇ, τόθ' ἡ ἐξ ἀσυμφώνων ὡς κρίσις καὶ συγκατάθεσις τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ θαυματομένῳ πίστιν ἰσχυρὰν λαμβάνει καὶ ἀναμφίλεκτον ("To speak generally, you should consider that to be beautifully and truly sublime which pleases all people at all times. For when men who differ in their pursuits, their lives, their tastes, their ages, their languages, all agree together in holding one and the same view about the same writings, then the unanimous verdict, as it were, of such discordant judges makes our faith in the admired passage strong and indisputable").

⁴³ Robortello (1554), 17.

⁴⁴ Portus (1569), index to *Peri hypsous*. Manuzio's edition does not signal the presence of individual citations in the treatise. De Petra's edition (1612), notes that Longinus does not quote Genesis verbatim: De Petra (1612), 59: τὴν ἔννοιαν κοινῇ *spectavit Dionys. non verba. Vide Genes. 1.*

⁴⁵ See above n. 15 for a full quotation of Portus' observations.

3.3.1 An early reference? ‘Longinus’ on Scripture in John of Sicily

Possibly the earliest reference to Longinus’ citation of Genesis (and to *Peri hypsous* at all) may be found in the work of the eleventh-century Byzantine rhetorician John of Sicily (Johannes Siceliotes). In his commentary to Hermogenes’ Περί ἰδεῶν, John of Sicily notes:

καὶ ὁ Μωϋσῆς· εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς, γεννηθῇ τόδε, καὶ ἐγένετο τόδε, ὃν οὐ μόνον Χριστιανῶν ἐκθειάζουσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων οἱ ἄριστοι, Λογγίνος, καὶ ὁ ἐκ Φαληρέως Δημήτριος.⁴⁶

And as Moses said: “God said: ‘Let there be this, and there was this’”, words that not only the best of Christians, but also the best of the Greeks worship, namely Longinus and Demetrius of Phalerum.

This passage is situated in John of Sicily’s discussion of Hermogenes’ idea of σεμνότης (‘solemnity’, ‘majesty’). As an example of the depiction of divine matters, Hermogenes adduced Plato’s *Timaeus*, and Hyperides’ *Delias*. In his commentary, John of Sicily added to this a reference to the 38th *Oration* of Gregory of Nazianzen.⁴⁷ These three examples, each concerned with divine birth and creation, are followed in John’s commentary by the remarks on Moses’ account of creation and the reference to ‘Longinus’.⁴⁸

It is uncertain whether John of Sicily actually refers to chapter 9.9 of *Peri hypsous*, although the reference to a Greek writer called ‘Longinus’ and a positive appraisal of Genesis 1.3 is certainly conspicuous.⁴⁹ At several places in his

⁴⁶ John of Sicily, *Commentary to Περί ἰδεῶν*, ch. 6: C. Walz (ed.), *Rhetores Graeci VI* (Stuttgart: Cott, 1834), 211).

⁴⁷ See the discussion of the context in Männlein-Robert (2001), 599-600.

⁴⁸ Plato’s *Timaeus* describes the creation of the universe; Hyperides’ (lost) *Delias* narrates how Leto gave birth to Apollo and Diana; in his 38th *Oration* Gregory of Nazianzen hymns how the Christian God did not originate from (human) birth.

⁴⁹ It is equally uncertain which text John of Sicily had in mind when referring to Demetrius of Phaleron in this context. John possibly refers to Demetrius’ involvement with the creation of the Septuagint, which is reported in the second-century *Letter of Aristeas*. See D. De Crom, ‘The Letter of Aristeas and the Authority of the Septuagint’, *Journal for the study of the Pseudepigrapha* 17.2 (2008), 141-160.

commentary the Byzantine scholar however clearly refers to works ascribed to the third-century rhetorician Cassius Longinus, which suggests that this particular passage could also originate from a work of Cassius Longinus, rather than from *Peri hypsous* (assuming that Cassius Longinus is not the author of *Peri hypsous*).⁵⁰ Mazzucchi notes that the oldest manuscript of *Peri hypsous* was produced only a little earlier than the period in which John of Sicily was active, which indicates that in John's time there was some interest in the treatise. It is therefore possible that John of Sicily could have had direct knowledge of *Peri hypsous*.⁵¹ Alternatively, Mazzucchi suggests that John of Sicily does refer to the third-century rhetorician Cassius Longinus, who in turn may have borrowed the passage from *Peri hypsous*.⁵²

Männlein-Robert, who includes the passage in her edition of the fragments of Cassius Longinus, argues that the passage in John's commentary is different from the passage in *Peri hypsous* 9.9, because John of Sicily, unlike the author of *Peri hypsous*, discusses the Biblical account of the Creation in terms of a general formula.⁵³ I would however contend that the abstract representation of the phrase εἶπεν ὁ θεός, γεννηθῇ τόδε, καὶ ἐγένετο τόδε ("God said: 'Let there be this, and there was this'") in John of Sicily rather very much *resembles* the conspicuous parallelism that Longinus constructed in his presentation of the creation of light and earth, which is likewise modelled after a general formula. Even if the question remains unanswered whether John of Sicily actually referred to *Peri hypsous*, there are two aspects to this example that merit our attention. The first is the context in which it is mentioned. By including the example in his commentary on

⁵⁰ Irmgard Männlein-Robert takes John's remarks about Genesis to be a reference to Cassius Longinus and includes the passage in her edition of Cassius Longinus' fragments: Männlein-Robert (2001), 599-608. Russell (1964), xxv-xxviii and Porter (2016), 3-4 consider the reference of John of Sicily insufficient evidence to settle the matter of the treatise's authorship. See also the Introduction for a discussion of the date and authorship of *Peri hypsous*.

⁵¹ Mazzucchi (1990), 192.

⁵² Mazzucchi suggests that the reference to a 'Longinus' praising Genesis could have been part of the commentary tradition on Hermogenes' *On Types of Style*, and hence ended up in John's commentary. Cassius Longinus could in turn have borrowed the citation directly from *Peri hypsous*, or from a common source, possibly Caecilius of Caleacte (Mazzucchi, 1990, 192).

⁵³ Männlein-Robert (2001), 603. The edition of Cassius Longinus by M. Patillon and L. Brisson (*Longin. Fragments. Art rhétorique*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001) does not include this fragment.

Hermogenes' *On types of style*, John uses it as reflection on (biblical) stylistics.⁵⁴ Secondly, John of Sicily stresses the fact that Longinus and Demetrius are not Christians, but Greeks. Their pagan background makes their positive appraisal of Moses' words all the more remarkable. As I will show in the following sections, the elements of 'Biblical style' and 'pagan praise of Scripture' are central to the early modern discussion of *Peri hypsous* 9.9.

3.3.2 Rhetoric: Caselius, Vossius, Keckermann, Caussin

The earliest reference to Longinus' citation of Genesis in early modernity is found in the work of Johannes Caselius, professor of eloquence at the university of Rostock.⁵⁵ In his commentary to Pseudo-Demetrius' treatise *On Style*, Caselius includes Longinus' remarks on Genesis in the context of Demetrius' discussion of 'short sentences' (*On Style* 7):

Longinus etiam magister dicendi eximius et acerrimus censor scriptorum, Mosen laudat, qui verbo omnia condidisse memoriae prodiderit. ταύτην, inquit, καὶ ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεσμοθέτης, οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐγνώρισε⁵⁶, κατέφηνεν, εὐθὺς ἐν τῇ εἰσβολῇ γράψας τῶν νόμων, εἶπεν ὁ Θεός, φησί, τί· γενέσθω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο: γενέσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγένετο. Etsi monumenta Mosis nequaquam hausta sunt ex humanae sapientiae aut eloquentiae fontibus.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ The appearance of the example in relation to Hermogenes' discussion of σεμνότης moreover resembles the way in which early modern scholars compared Longinus' idea of ὕψος with Hermogenes' category of σεμνότης, such as in the commentary of Franciscus Portus, and the rhetoric of Gerardus Joannes Vossius, which will be discussed shortly.

⁵⁵ Johannes Caselius spent time in Italy in the 1560s and probably got to know Longinus' through his Italian scholarly contacts. See section 1.4.2 on Caselius' involvement with *Peri hypsous*.

⁵⁶ The editions of Russell (1964) and Mazzucchi (2010) have ἐχώρησε; the variant ἐγνώρισε is found in the margins of the Cambridge manuscript (Cambridge University Library Kk.VI.34), supposedly added by Paolo Manuzio (see Russell, 1964, 12, and Mazzucchi, 2010, 24). Both variants were current in the early modern editions of Longinus' treatise. Robortello's edition (Basel, 1554) has ἐχώρησε ('to form a conception of'; 'to conceive'), while the editions of Manuzio (Venice, 1555), Porto (Geneva, 1569), and De Petra (Geneva, 1612) have ἐγνώρισε ('to gain knowledge of').

⁵⁷ Caselius (1585), c4^r-c4^v.

And furthermore Longinus, an excellent teacher of eloquence and sharp-witted critic of writers, praises Moses, who related that [God] created everything with his word. So too, he says, the lawgiver of the Jews, not just any man, having gained knowledge of a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it, wrote at the very beginning of his Laws: “God said” - what? ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light, ‘Let there be earth,’ and there was earth.” Even if Moses’ account by no means originates from sources of human wisdom or eloquence.

In the context of Caselius’ commentary, Longinus’ citation serves to illustrate the power of brevity in writing. Caselius probably chose it because of the short clauses in (Longinus’ rendering of) Genesis 1.3-10, but also adds that Moses’ words are not a product of human rhetoric, thereby probably anticipating criticism of his discussion of a biblical example in the context of pagan rhetoric.

In 1606 Vossius published the first edition of his *Commentarii Rhetorici* (also known under the title *Institutiones Rhetoricae*), which was followed by augmented editions in 1609, 1630 and 1643.⁵⁸ In this massive work on rhetorical theory Vossius includes a discussion of the various *characteres* (‘types of style’), among which the *character grandis* (‘grand style’).⁵⁹ In this context, Vossius discusses ‘what kind of subject matter makes discourse grand’ (*quae sententiae grandem reddant orationem*), such as, for instance, ‘divine matters’ (*res divinae*).⁶⁰ These are illustrated with a reference to Longinus’ citation of the Bible:

⁵⁸ See Rademaker (1981), 356.

⁵⁹ See Mack (2011), 192-196 on the structure of Vossius’ *Commentarii Rhetorici*.

⁶⁰ Vossius (1630), II, 446. In this chapter and throughout this book I have cited from the 1630 edition of Vossius’ work. The editions of 1606 and 1609 are significantly smaller than the edition of 1630. The main text in the edition of 1606 (in octavo) has 420 pages, while the main text in the edition of 1609 (in octavo) has 930 pages. The edition of 1630 is printed in quarto, in two volumes of 431 and 527 pages respectively. In the edition of 1609 the Genesis citation is quoted on p. 848-849. I have not been able to consult the very rare 1606 edition of Vossius’ *Commentarii* (a copy is present in the Bodleian Library: 8° V 33 Art.). Thus I could not ascertain whether Vossius’ quotation of *Peri hypsous* 9.9 is already present in the 1606 edition. Given the fact that the 1606 edition of his *Commentarii* is already divided into six books (as are the later editions), it is not unlikely that this particular part of the *Commentarii* could also have been included in the first edition. See also note 66 below.

Certe Mosen, quod de Deo magnifica oratione sit usus, laudat pago deditus Longinus, impii illius Porphyrii praeceptor, ut Eunapius et Suidas tradunt, ac Porphyrius ipse agnoscit. Verba Longini afferam: ταύτη καὶ ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεσμοθέτης, οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐγνώρισε, καξέφηενεν, εὐθὺς ἐν τῇ εἰσβολῇ γράψας τῶν νόμων, Εἶπεν ὁ Θεός· φησί τί; Γενέσθω φῶς· καὶ ἐγένετο· Γενέσθω γῆ· καὶ ἐγένετο. Iccirco Iudaeorum quoque legislator, vir haut vulgaris, quandoquidem divini numinis virtutem pro dignitate cognovit ac divulgavit; statim in ingressu atque initio legum scribens, Dixit Deus; quid inquit? Fiat lux; et facta est; Fiat terra; et facta est.⁶¹

Certainly, Moses, because he has spoken magnificently about God, is praised by Longinus, a pagan, the teacher of that impious Porphyry, as Eunapius and the *Suda* report, and Porphyry himself declares. Let me cite Longinus' words: So too, the lawgiver of the Jews, not just any man, having gained knowledge of a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it, wrote at the very beginning of his Laws: "God said"- what? 'Let there be light,' and there was light, 'Let there be earth,' and there was earth" [followed by a Latin translation of the Greek].

In Vossius' *Commentarii* Longinus' citation appears in a context that is similar to the context of the reference in John of Sicily. In this section of his work, Vossius invokes Hermogenes' discussion of σεμνότης ('solemnity'), including Hermogenes' reference to Plato's *Timaeus*.⁶² Vossius divides 'divine subject matter' into two different species. The *Timaeus* serves as an example of philosophical subject matter, whereas Longinus' *Fiat Lux* is adduced as an example of theological subject matter. Vossius explicitly dwells on the fact that Longinus is not a Christian, labelling him *pago deditus* ('pagan'). His explicit mentioning of this fact can be interpreted rhetorically: if even a pagan praises Scripture, its power must be universal. Vossius thus reverses the argument in *Peri hypsous*: by referring to the

⁶¹ Vossius (1630), II, 446.

⁶² Vossius (1630), II, 446. Vossius' rhetorical system is based to a large extent on Hermogenes' work *Περὶ ἰδεῶν* (*On types of style*). See D. Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 161-163, Till (2006), 119, and Huss (2011).

Bible, Longinus could argue that sublimity is a universal phenomenon that exists outside classical Greek literature. By referring to a pagan's praise of Scripture, Vossius in turn illustrated how the bible contains subject matter that is universally acknowledged as 'grand'.

In the *Systema rhetoricae* (1608) of Bartholomeus Keckermann (d. 1609), professor in Gdansk, we find a rendering of Longinus' quotation of Genesis that is almost identical to that in Vossius' *Commentarii rhetorici*.⁶³

Et sane Mosen quod de Deo magnifica oratione sit usus, laudat homo paganus Longinus, impi illius Porphyrii vel praeceptor ut vult Suidas, vel discipulus, ut tradit Eunapius in vitis Philosophorum. Verba. Long. ex Graeco sic sonant; idcirco Iudaeorum quoque Legislator, vir haud vulgaris; quandoquidem divini numinis virtutem pro dignitate cognovit ac divulgavit, statim in ingressu legum suarum scribit: Dixit Deus fiat lux, et facta est. Fiat terra, et facta est. Illud quoque operaeprecium fuerit hic monuisse, quod idem Longinus scribit, debere nos animum assuefacere ad concipiendas res magnas. Oritur enim orationis sublimitas ex animi magnitudine. Quibus vero animus semper humi repit, neque assurgit ad res grandes, ii neque grandem conficiunt orationem.⁶⁴

Longinus, a pagan man, either the teacher of that impious Porphyry (according to the *Suda*) or a student (according to Eunapius in the *Lives of the Philosophers*) praises Moses, because he has spoken magnificently about God. The Greek words of Longinus are as follows: 'therefore the lawgiver of the Jews, not just any man, when he had gained knowledge of a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it, wrote at the very beginning of his Laws: "God said"- what? 'Let there be light,' and there was light, 'Let there be earth,' and there was earth.'" It is moreover worthwhile to give the following advice (which Longinus himself also writes) that we should accustom our mind to conceiving great things. For sublimity in

⁶³ On Keckermann's life and work see J.S. Freedman, 'The Career and Writings of Bartholomäus Keckermann (d. 1609)', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 141.3 (1997), 305-364.

⁶⁴ B. Keckermann, *Systema rhetoricae. In quo artis praecepta plene et methodice traduntur* (Hanau: G. Antonius, 1608), 578.

writing originates from greatness of mind. But those people, whose minds always crawl close to the ground and never rises up towards great things, will never produce great writing.

Like Vossius, Keckermann mentions the citation in the context of Hermogenes' idea of solemnity.⁶⁵ Keckermann probably derived Longinus' citation from Vossius' *Commentarii rhetorici*. Throughout his work, Keckermann refers to Vossius' *Commentarii* several times, and his introduction of Longinus' reference resembles that of Vossius.⁶⁶ In any case, both Vossius and Keckermann adduce Longinus' citation as an example of 'grand subject matter', and explicitly mention Longinus' pagan background.

The focus on grand subject matter is even more prominent in the discussion of Longinus' citation by the French Jesuit Nicolas Caussin (1583-1651). In the preface to the first book of his *Eloquentia sacra et humana*, a rhetorical work that covers sacred as well as pagan oratory, Caussin discerns three types of eloquence: divine, heroic, and human.⁶⁷ Under divine eloquence, Caussin considers a kind of eloquence that does not spring from teaching, but which is caused by an inspiration from God that makes men into orators instantly. It has the power to bring everyone to the light of Christ, to subdue Kings and to turn peoples' minds towards love for religion. Moses is presented as a prime example of this divine eloquence, as his writings were admired by the highest pagan rhetoricians. Longinus' praise of Moses in *Peri hypsous* serves as an example of this:

⁶⁵ Shuger (1988), 161.

⁶⁶ Shuger (1988: 83), remarks that Keckermann has derived this material from Vossius, but concludes that Vossius' *Commentarii* must have been published already in 1605, as she assumes that Keckermann's *Systema* was published in 1606. The *Systema* was however published for the first time in 1608. It was based on a lecture given in 1606, according to a note on the title page of the work, but Keckermann may well have expanded his lecture notes with additional material from Vossius and others before publishing the *Systema* in 1608. Keckermann's remarks following Longinus citation (*Illud quoque [...] conficiunt orationem*) are identical to a passage in Vossius' *Commentarii* (p. 447), and thus appear to be a borrowing from Vossius' *Commentarii*, which is reinforced by the fact that Keckermann explicitly refers to the *Commentarii* in his work.

⁶⁷ Shuger (1988), 88.

Dionysius enim Longinus, qui librum de sublimi eloquentia scripsit, Moysen legens miratur in eo, non quidem inane locutionum choragium, sed notionum (ut ipse ait) mentis praepotentem et exaggeratam sapientiam, τὸ κράτιστον καὶ περὶ τὰς νοήσεις ἀδρεπήβολον, hac inquit excellentia praestabat ὁ Ἰουδαίων θεσμοθέτης οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ ἐπειδὴ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐγνώρισε καξέφηγεν, Iudaeorum ille Legislator non fuit vir de trivio, qui numinis virtutem pro dignitate cognovit, et verbis explicavit.⁶⁸

For when reading Moses, Dionysius Longinus, who wrote a book on sublime eloquence, indeed admired in his writings not the hollow decoration of discourse, but the powerful and elevated wisdom (as he himself says) of the mind's thoughts: "the power of grand conceptions"; in this excellence, he says, "the Lawgiver of the Jews stands out, not just any man, when he had worthily gained knowledge of the divine power and given expression to it"; [followed by a Latin paraphrase of the Greek].

Longinus, being the only critic that is quoted at length in the preface, fulfills an important function in this context, as his praise of Moses constitutes a bridge between sacred and pagan rhetoric that also underlies Caussin's work as a whole. Caussin stresses the context in which Longinus referred to Moses' writings: as part of Longinus' discussion of 'greatness of thought' (τὸ κράτιστον καὶ περὶ τὰς νοήσεις ἀδρεπήβολον, as announced in *Peri hypsous* 8.1), thus emphasising that Longinus admired Moses' writings not because of their style, but because of their exalted contents. Caussin takes his interpretation of the citation a bit further than Vossius and Keckermann, as he explicitly differentiates it from 'hollow decoration of discourse' (*inane locutionum choragium*), thereby judging negatively about 'grandeur' that only springs from phrasing or style.

Caussin refers to Longinus' quotation of Genesis a second time in his work, in his discussion of the ninth *fons inventionis* ('source of invention'): the source of sacred writings. According to Caussin, the most important source for the faithful Christian is the marvellous loftiness and marvellous humility of Scripture itself

⁶⁸ N. Caussin, *Eloquentiae sacrae et humanae parallela libri XVI* (Paris: S. Chappelet, 1619), 2.

(Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.151). Caussin notes that he has found only two passages in the works of ‘eminent pagans’ (*insignium Ethnicorum*), who acknowledged the majesty of Scripture. The first is the Neoplatonic philosopher Amelius Apamensis, who discussed the opening of the Gospel of St John. Caussin’s second example is Longinus:

Alter est Dionysii Longini in libello Περί ὕψους, priori libro memoratus, ubi maiestatem notionum mentis, et sensuum commendans, citat ex Homero Neptunum aurigantem, quem locum a poëta gravissime pertextum ostendit, nam τρέμε δ’ οὐρεα μακρὰ καὶ ὕληποσσὶν ὑπ’ ἀθανάτοισι Ποσειδάωνος ἰόντος.⁶⁹ Mox Moysen cum Homero comparans, ait illum Iudaeorum legislatorem non fuisse virum de trivio, qui tam sublimem de Deo notionem habuit, ut de eo scriberet: Dixit Deus, fiat lux, et facta est lux; fiat terra, et facta est. ταύτη καὶ ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεσμοθέτης, οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐγνώρισε κατέφηνεν, εὐθύς ἐν τῇ εἰσβολῇ γράψας τῶν νόμων· εἶπεν ὁ Θεός φησί, τί γενέσθω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο· γενέσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγένετο.”⁷⁰

The other is Dionysius Longinus in his booklet *Peri hypsous*, which I mentioned already in the first book, where he, commending the greatness of the mind’s ideas, and of the subject matter [of a text], cites from Homer Neptune driving his chariot – he presents the passage very interweaved by [other verses of] the poet – namely: “and the high mountains trembled and the woodland beneath the immortal feet of Poseidon as he went.” Then comparing Moses with Homer, he says that this lawgiver of the Jews was not an ordinary man, as he held such an exalted notion of God, that he wrote about him: “God said, let there be light, and there was light; let there be earth, and there was earth.” [Followed by Longinus’ full citation in Greek: ‘So too, the lawgiver of the Jews, not just any man, having gained knowledge of a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to

⁶⁹ Homer, *Iliad* 13.18-19.

⁷⁰ Caussin (1619), 137. Caussin does not translate Longinus’ insertion τί; (‘what?’)

it, wrote at the very beginning of his Laws: "God said"- what? 'Let there be light,' and there was light, 'Let there be earth,' and there was earth.'"]

Caussin's treatment of Longinus' citation of Genesis indicates a thorough knowledge of the treatise, which is also attested by Caussin's frequent references to *Peri hypsous* throughout the *Eloquentia Sacra*.⁷¹ In this particular case Longinus is adduced as one of two examples of pagan writers who admired the majesty of Scripture.⁷² Even more than Vossius and Keckermann, Caussin exploits Longinus' pagan background to underpin the universal power of Scripture. Longinus' citation offers a conspicuous reconciliation of the religious and pagan domains, which is especially relevant for Caussin's work on sacred and human eloquence, and, as I will show next, in theological debates as well.

3.3.3 Biblical scholarship: Chamier, Casaubon

The scholars that cite Longinus' quotation of the *Fiat Lux* in their rhetorics all mention that Longinus is not a Christian, which enables them to make the claim that the Bible is universally admired. Even more than in the rhetorical works, this type of claim has a bearing on discussions about the value of Scripture in biblical scholarship. In the same year in which the first edition of Vossius' *Commentarii rhetorici* appeared, the French huguenot theologian Daniel Chamier (1564/5-1621) published his *Panstratia Catholica, seu Corpus Controversiarum adversus Pontificios*, a discussion of the controversies between catholics and protestants, primarily aimed at the counter-reformer Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621). When addressing the question whether the Church should present Scripture in the vernacular (a practice that Bellarmine rejected) Chamier argues that the greatness of the bible's teachings may be grasped from any version, since:

Maiestas non pendet a vocabulis, sed a rebus ipsis. Nihil enim Sanctum est, quod non habeat suam maiestatem, non adventitiam, et accidentariam, sed sibi insitam. Itaque, quancunque in linguam transferantur, ab ea destitui non possunt. Sic Longinus περὶ ὕψους, quamquam Mosen Hebraice non

⁷¹ See also Shuger (1988) for a discussion of Caussin in the context of biblical stylistics.

⁷² Amelius however is less positive than Longinus, as he calls John a 'barbarian'.

legisset, tamen observavit in Graeco idiomate, eius styli maiestatem: usque est tanquam illustri granditatis exemplo, ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεσμοθέτης (inquit) οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐγνώρισε, κατέφηνεν, εὐθὺς ἐν τῇ εἰσβολῇ γραψας τῶν νόμων, εἶπεν ὁ Θεός, φησί, τί, γενέσθω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο, γενέσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγένετο. Iudaeorum legislator, non quivis homo, cum numinis vim pro dignitate cognoscendam tradidisset, et illustrasset, statim in legum exordio, Dixit Deus, inquit, quid? Fiat lux, et facta est: fiat terra, et facta est.⁷³

Greatness does not depend on words, but on the things themselves. For nothing is sacred, which does not have its own greatness; not greatness which is newly found, or accidental, but inherent to the thing itself. Thus whenever something is expressed in language, it cannot be separated from it [i.e. its greatness]. So Longinus, in his treatise *Peri hypsous*, even though he did not read Moses in Hebrew, was still able to observe its greatness of style in the Greek language, and he has used a famous example of greatness: ‘the Lawgiver of the Jews’, he says, ‘not just any man, having gained knowledge of a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it, wrote at the very beginning of his Laws: ‘God said’ - what? ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light, ‘Let there be earth,’ and there was earth’ [followed by a Latin translation of the Greek].

That Longinus could recognise the greatness of the *Fiat Lux* despite the fact that he read Moses in Greek serves to underpin Chamier’s argument that the Bible’s power is not lost in translation. For this purpose, Chamier (like Vossius, Keckermann and Caussin) stressed the fact that Longinus used the quotation from Genesis to illustrate greatness as an inherent characteristic of certain subject matter (rather than a characteristic of verbal expression).

The classical scholar and humanist Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614) used Longinus’ citation of Genesis against the views of Counter-Reformers. Casaubon already referred to Longinus’ praise of Moses in his edition of the *Historia Augusta* (1603),

⁷³ D. Chamier, *Panstratiae Catholicae, sive controversiarum de religione adversus pontificios corpus* (Geneva: Roverianus, 1606), 389 (11.2.12).

but does so again in his *De rebus sacris et ecclesiasticis exercitationes* (1615). In this work Casaubon reacts to the *Annales Ecclesiastici* (published between 1588 and 1607) of Cardinal Caesar Baronius (1538-1607), as well as other Catholic theologians. In one of the comments to Baronius' *Annales*, Casaubon responds to the views of counter-reformers who refuted the Protestant principle of *sola Scriptura* and argued that the Christian faith is based on the apostolic tradition as well. Cardinal Robert Bellarmine had stated in his *De Verbo Dei scripto et non scripto* (first edition 1586) that the apostolic tradition is essential for proving the divine nature of Scripture. It is not sufficient evidence that the Scriptures themselves attest of their divine origin, for the same can be found for instance in the Quran, which is not considered holy among Christians.⁷⁴ Casaubon responds to this by saying:

Nunquam, opinor, id facturus, si tantopere verbi divini Majestatem esset admiratus, ac fecit olim Criticus insignis, Paganus tamen homo, Dionysius Longinus, cuius extat aureolus περὶ ὑψους libellus.⁷⁵

I think he would never have done this [comparing the Bible to the Quran], if he had admired the greatness of the divine word as much as once an eminent critic did, even though he was a pagan, Dionysius Longinus, of whom the golden booklet *Peri hypsous* has been preserved.

Casaubon uses Longinus as a testimonium that the greatness of the Scriptures is universally evident, while sneering that even a pagan could admire in Scripture, what Bellarminus (and the counter-reformers in general) could not. Interestingly, Casaubon spoke quite differently about Longinus in his edition of the *Historia Augusta* (1603). In his notes to Flavius Vopiscus, an author who mentioned Cassius Longinus in the *Historia Augusta*, Casaubon suggested that Longinus must have been a 'semi-Christian', because he praised Moses' writings in his treatise.⁷⁶ Twelve

⁷⁴ Bellarminus, *De Verbo Dei scripto et non scripto* (Sedan: J. Jannonus, 1618), 317.

⁷⁵ I. Casaubon, *De rebus sacris et ecclesiasticis exercitationes XVI* (Frankfurt: J. Bringerus, 1615), 110.

⁷⁶ Flavius Vopiscus is one of the authors of the *Historia Augusta*, a collection of Roman historical writings. In his notes to Vopiscus' text (which mentions Longinus), Casaubon remarks: *Extat hodieque Longini Περί ὑψους libellus vere aureolus: ex quo semichristianum fuisse, non male fortasse colligas, propter*

years later, in his *De rebus sacris et ecclesiasticis exercitationes*, Casaubon presents Longinus as a pagan, a designation that would have been much more conducive to his polemical argument.

Both Casaubon and Chamier make a point about the value of the Bible in translation: Longinus' praise of Moses is an indication that the greatness of Scripture may be grasped from any version, as it is located in subject matter and is independent from its verbal expression.

3.3.4 *Simplicity and the rejection of corrupted eloquence: Grotius, Heinsius, De Petra*

In the rhetorical works of Caselius, Vossius, Keckermann and Caussin, as in the biblical scholarship of Chamier and Casaubon, Longinus' citation of Genesis stands out as a non-Christian judgment about the Bible. All of these scholars present the citation as an example of elevated subject matter, in keeping with the function of the passage in *Peri hypsous*. The treatment of Longinus' citation in the context of biblical stylistics however invites a more radical interpretation that is not necessitated by the treatise itself, as I will show in the present section. In the biblical scholarship of Hugo Grotius and Daniel Heinsius Longinus' citation of Genesis is connected to the stylistic ideal of 'simplicity', and thus becomes an example of elevated subject matter that is expressed in simple language. At the same time, the passage is interpreted as a rejection of stylistic decoration as a source of genuine sublimity, an interpretation that was already attached to Longinus' treatise by Daniel Heinsius in the *Prolegomena* to his edition of Hesiod (which I discussed in Chapter Two). The opposition between corrupted and pure (Biblical) rhetoric also plays a role in one of the dedicatory epistles in Gabriele De Petra's edition of *Peri hypsous*, which will also be discussed in the present section.

illud quod facit de Mosis scriptis iudicium ("Of Longinus a truly golden booklet 'On the Sublime' has been transmitted until the present day: from which one could deduce, perhaps rightly so, that he was a 'semi-Christian', because of this judgment he provided on the writings of Moses"). I. Casaubon, *Historiae Augustae scriptores sex*, Paris: A. & H. Drovart, 1603, 511-512. In his annotated copy of *Peri hypsous*, Casaubon praised Longinus for his excellent judgment about Moses and indicated the page number of the citation on the title page of his copy (British Library 1088.m.2). Casaubon also mentioned Longinus in his personal notes when discussing the obscurity of the language of the prophets. See A. Grafton and J. Weinberg, *"I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue": Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 105-108.

Longinus' citation of Genesis played an interesting role in Hugo Grotius' unpublished essay *Meletius sive de iis quae inter christianos conveniunt epistola*. The *Meletius*, which can be regarded as a preliminary study of Grotius' famous work *De veritate religionis Christianae*, was written around 1611, when Grotius was Advocate General of the States of Holland, Zeeland and Friesland.⁷⁷ In the *Meletius* Grotius presents the Bible as a universally connecting factor, and he uses Longinus to make a point about the Bible's authority:

Adde iam simplicitatem summam dictionis cum maiestate coniunctam. Dionysius Longinus rhetor qui Περί ὑψους (de sublimi dictione) scripsit, ait id ὑψος, id est, quod de rebus divinis convenit, optime observatum a Iudaeorum legislatore, quem vocat ἄνδρα οὐ τὸν τυχόντα, ἐπειδὴ, inquit, τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐχώρησε καξέφηεν, εὐθὺς ἐν τῇ εἰσβολῇ γράψας τῶν νόμων "εἶπεν ὁ Θεός", φησί, τί; "γενέσθω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο, γενέσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγένετο." (Virum non e vulgo, divinam enim virtutem ex dignitate comprehendit explicuitque, cum in ipso legum scripsit initio, "Dixit", inquit, "Deus, fiat lux et facta est. Fiat terra et facta est"). Simplicitas autem praeterquam quod pars magna est maiestatis etiam huc pertinet, ut omnes, etiam indocti, ibi sine circuitu inveniant id quod saluti pariendae sufficiat.⁷⁸

Add to this the highest simplicity of diction, connected with greatness. Dionysius Longinus, the rhetorician who has written *Peri hypsous* (on sublime diction), calls this ὑψος, that is, which deals with divine matters, which has been observed perfectly by the Lawgiver of the Jews, whom he calls 'not just any man; when', as Longinus says 'he has formed a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it, writing a the very beginning of his Laws: "God said"- what? 'let there be light,' and there was light, 'Let there be earth,' and there was earth'" [followed by a Latin translation of the Greek]. Simplicity however not only constitutes a large

⁷⁷ The *Meletius* shares with the *De veritate* its apologetic approach, see Posthumus Meyjes (1988), 22-26.

⁷⁸ Grotius, *Meletius* (ca. 1611), §54-55. Text: Posthumus Meyjes (1988). Grotius does not translate Longinus' insertion τί; ('what?').

part of magnificence, but also belongs to this, namely that all people, even those without learning, can find in that place what is necessary for gaining salvation.

In order to emphasise the authority of the Bible, Grotius points to ‘the highest simplicity of diction, connected with greatness’. Like several other scholars and theologians (such as Keckermann, Caussin, and Chamier), Grotius takes Longinus’ quotation as an example of greatness of thought (*majestas* or ὑψος), but also connects it to a characteristic feature of biblical style: simplicity.⁷⁹ By adducing *Peri hypsous* 9.9 as an example of ‘the highest simplicity of diction, connected with greatness’ (*simplicitas summa dictionis cum maiestate coniuncta*), Grotius attaches to the passage an idea that is not present in Longinus’ treatise: the concept of ‘sublime simplicity’. Grotius’ reasons for including Longinus’ citation in this particular context are to be sought in the discussion of biblical style in the work of one of Grotius’ predecessors: the *De veritate religionis Christianae* (1983) of Philippe du Plessis-Mornay, which I will discuss in more detail in section 3.3.5 of this Chapter. Grotius also referred to Longinus’ citation of Genesis in various editions of his *De veritate religionis Christianae* (1627, 1640) as well as his *Annotationes in libros Evangeliorum* (1641) and in his *Annotata ad Vetus Testamentum* (1644). As I will discuss in section 3.4.3 of this Chapter, Grotius’ reference to Longinus in the *De veritate* moreover played a role of significance in the development of the *Querelle du Fiat Lux*.

A similar point about simplicity is made by Daniel Heinsius in his commentary on Nonnus’ paraphrase of the Gospel of St John (1627). In the commentary to Nonnus’ text, Heinsius disapproves of Nonnus’ strange style of writing, which differs so much from the Gospel of St John itself. The beauty of the Gospel is in turn illustrated with a reference to Longinus’ quotation of Genesis.

⁷⁹ In the manuscript notes that served as the preparatory study for the *Meletius*, Grotius already noted down some of his arguments. Under “Dion Longinus” Grotius noted down *veritas, antiquitas, consensus, utilitas, simplicitas, gratia necessaria*. See G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, ‘Some Remarks on Grotius’ *Excerpta Theologica*, Especially Concerning His *Meletius*’, in: H.J.M. Nellen and E. Rabbie (eds.), *Hugo Grotius Theologian. Essays in Honour of G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 1-17: 12.

Itaque, quemadmodum Longinus, autor nobilissimus, profanus tamen, qui de sublimitate orationis scripsit, quamvis Mosen Graece legisset, dicendi tamen characterem admiratus est: (unde et οὐ τυχόντα ἄνδρα, non vulgarem virum, vocat) ita in Scriptore nostro, in sermone ἀφέλεια, in sensibus est ὑψηλότης.⁸⁰

Just like, for instance, Longinus, a most noble writer, though a pagan, who wrote about the sublimity of speech, even though he read Moses in Greek, still admired his style of writing (hence he calls him “not just any man”), so in our Writer we find simplicity in the language, and sublimity in the thoughts.

Heinsius too uses Longinus to make a point about simplicity of words (ἀφέλεια), combined with sublimity of meaning or thought (ὑψηλότης). Heinsius adapts Longinus’ remarks on Genesis to the context of biblical scholarship by relating them to ideas about the simple and unpretentious style of the bible.⁸¹

In the preface to his edition of Nonnus Heinsius moreover adduces Longinus as an expert judge on stylistic faults.⁸² In criticising Nonnus’ style Heinsius refers to Longinus’ remarks about bombast in *Peri hypsous* 3.

Denique, ut idem sapiens Longinus paucis dixit, τεθόλωται γὰρ τῇ φράσει καὶ τεθορύβηται ταῖς φαντασίαις μᾶλλον ἢ δεδείνωται id est, confusa elocutione, et turbulentis imaginibus ac sensibus, de gravitate orationis ac splendore minus sibi quam oportuit prospexit. qui character, optime φλοιώδης, ψυχρὸς, κομπώδης, ὑπόχυλος, μετέωρος, ab iisdem, quibus nunquam elegancia verborum ac translationum defuit, non sine causa nuncupatur.⁸³

⁸⁰ Heinsius, *Aristarchus sacer* (1627), 230-231.

⁸¹ The use of Longinus’ quotation of Genesis gains special relevance here since the opening of St John’s Gospel mirrors the first verses of Genesis: “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis) versus “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Gospel of St John). Longinus’ praise of Genesis is a sensible example in this context.

⁸² Heinsius, *Aristarchus sacer* (1627), *****4v.

⁸³ Heinsius, *Aristarchus sacer* (1627), *****4v - *****5r.

Finally, as that same wise critic Longinus explained briefly: “the phrasing is turbid, while the images make for confusion rather forcefulness”, which means: through confused diction and chaotic images and ideas, he provides himself with less gravity and splendour in discourse than he should. This style of writing, is rightfully called very “bombastic, frigid, ostentatious, fake, and inflated”, by those who are well endowed with elegant words and translations.

In the preface and commentary to his edition of Nonnus Heinsius adapts *Peri hypsous* to the context of biblical scholarship in two ways: Longinus’ citation of Genesis (which in itself invites an incorporation in the domain of biblical studies), is used to illustrate two key characteristics of the Gospel: simplicity in style, majesty in subject matter. Like Grotius, Heinsius exploits the potential of *Peri hypsous* 9.9 to be used as an ‘external’ judgment about Scripture. Heinsius moreover uses Longinus’ discussion of failed sublimity (*Peri hypsous* 3) to illustrate Nonnus’ muddled style and to underline the difference with the original text of the Gospel. His use of *Peri hypsous* and other ancient sources on rhetoric and literary criticism indicates that Heinsius did not perceive it as problematic to intertwine pagan rhetoric and biblical style.

A confrontation of these two domains is also present in the dedicatory epistle of Gabriele De Petra’s edition of *Peri hypsous*. The dedication is addressed to Abraham Stürler and Albrecht Manuel, magistrates of Bern. Several other letters that are included in the edition moreover attest to De Petra’s discussions about Longinus with two colleagues at the Academy of Lausanne: Estienne de Beauchasteau, Professor of Greek in Lausanne and minister in Lutry, and Jacob Amport, professor of philosophy and theology in Lausanne. The theological affinities of De Petra’s milieu, as well as De Petra’s own position as a minister, seem to have prompted a rather apologetic passage in his dedicatory epistle, which frames Longinus’ ideas in the context of St Paul’s criticism of rhetoric in the Corinthian epistles.

In his dedication, De Petra presents *Peri hypsous* as a gift, which ‘opens the gates to the innermost sanctuaries of rhetoric’. The magistrates Stürler and Manuel in turn are called the defenders of ‘that sublime eloquence’ (*sublimioris istius eloquentiae vindices*), against two kinds of people: firstly, those who adorn petty

thoughts with grand words, like a child wearing a tragic mask (*Peri hypsous* 30), and secondly, those who corrupt great subject matter with mean and base expressions.⁸⁴ De Petra compares the second category to the false prophets (ψευδαπόστολοι) that St Paul describes in his second Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 11.13):

In posterioris generis censu prodeunt ὀγκηροί τινες et garruli Sophistae, sublimitatis ornamenta ἀκαίρως καὶ ἀλόγως subinde usurpantes, ut hoc pacto apud imperitam multitudinem sapientiae laudem et gloriam aucupentur. Quo vitio, communi huius aevi plurimis Rhetorculis, laborasse ψευδαποστόλους tempore Pauli, Philosophorum placita et hujus generis alia οὐχ ὑψηλὰ, ἀλλὰ μετέωρα⁸⁵ loco νοήσεων Evangelicarum, in quibus vera sublimitas, urgentes audimus: quales hodie sunt omnes illi quos simplicitatis textus Evangelici quum pudeat, ad alia (si diis placet) sublimiora ἄνδρες φλοιώδεις confugiunt, ut verbi gratia, inepti illi qui pro fide persuasionem dicunt, pro Evangelio caelestem P[h]ilosophiam, et id genus alia, quibus evangelicam puritatem et eloquentiam corrumpunt:

⁸⁴ De Petra (1612), dedication: *Ac prioris quidem generis sunt non modo omnes illi qui apertum suum in Eloquentiam et Eloquentiae studiosos odium, quavis occasione frigidum suum virus evomentes, telumque imbelles sine ictu conijicientes, profitentur: sed illi omnes quos ψιλοὺς καὶ ψυχροὺς vocant Graeci nostri, quorum φρόνημα ταπεινὸν ἐτ' ἀγεννές, quales sunt mancipiorum et abjectissimorum servitiorum cogitationes, et hujus generis aliorum infelicitium hominum μικρὰ καὶ δουλοπρεπὴ μόνον φρονοῦντων (ἐρπετὰ ζῶα verius dixeris) qui siquando assurgere volunt, tum μικροῖς πραγματίοις μεγάλα καὶ σεμνα ὀνόματα περιτιθέμενοι infantissimos sese produnt. Perinde enim id esse Longinus dicit, ac si quis puero aut infanti tragicam magnamque personam accomodaverit. Vel contra τοῖς μεγέθει νοήσεων μικρὰ καὶ δουλοπρεπὴ ὀνόματα ἐφαρμόσαντες res magnas verborum exilitate deprimunt atque corrumpunt.* ("And of the first kind are not only all those who openly express their hate aimed at Eloquence and those who study Eloquence, although vomiting out their frigid poison when the occasion arises, and hurling an unwarlike weapon without a blow: but all those who our Greeks call dry and frigid, whose thinking is base and low-born, like the thoughts of slavery and abject servitude, and of that kind of other unhappy people thinking mean and slavish thoughts (creeping creatures I should call them), who, whenever they want to rise up, always show themselves to be most childish, as they adorn small, trifling matters with grand and solemn words. For Longinus says that it is like this, just like when one accommodates a tragic, grand character to a boy or child. Or conversely, those who join mean and slavish words with greatnesses of thought depress and corrupt great things with poorness of words"). These faults as described by De Petra resemble Longinus' discussion of puerility and tumidity in *Peri hypsous* 3.

⁸⁵ *Peri hypsous* 3.5.

quem στόμφον tum in verbis tum in sentiis ὑπεροχῆς λόγου καὶ σοφίας verbo intelligit Apostolus. πλὴν περὶ μὲν τούτων ἄλλος ἀπόκειται τόπος.⁸⁶

Among the second type we find pompous people and garrulous Sophists, who use the ornaments of sublimity unfittingly and foolishly, so that in doing so they harvest praise and glory from people who are inexperienced in wisdom. We have heard with great concern that false prophets in the time of St Paul were afflicted with this vice, which is common to our age of many little rhetoricians, and that doctrines of Philosophers, and other things of this kind, which are not sublime but highfalutin, came in the place of the contents of the Gospels, in which true sublimity is to be found: of the same kind are all those in present times, who, because they are ashamed of the simplicity of the text of the Gospel, seek their refuge in other (if you will), more sublime things, being superficial men, just like, for example, those impertinent people, who say ‘persuasion’ instead of ‘faith’, ‘heavenly Philosophy’ instead of ‘Gospel’, and similar things, with which they corrupt the purity and eloquence of the Gospels. This is the type of bombast that the Apostle meant to indicate in either words or subject matter with the expression ‘loftiness of speech or wisdom’. For those things however another place lies open.

De Petra describes how false apostles (*pseudapostoloi*) disparaged the true sublimity (*vera sublimitas*) of the Gospels, just like in present times bombast (στόμφον) is valued over purity and simplicity.⁸⁷ The phrase ὑπεροχῆς λόγου καὶ σοφίας (‘loftiness of speech or wisdom’) is an allusion to 1 Corinthians 2:1: “and I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.”⁸⁸ De Petra refers to St Paul’s attitude towards rhetoric in the Corinthian letters, which, in De Petra’s argument, is

⁸⁶ De Petra (1612), dedication.

⁸⁷ The complaint that the present time is full of petty rhetoricians (*rhetorculi*) also recalls Longinus’ discussion of the decay of literature and disappearance of true sublimity in *Peri hypsous* 44.

⁸⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:1 (Septuagint): καγὼ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἀδελφοί ἦλθον οὐ καθ’ ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ (“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God”).

centred on two oppositions: firstly between pagan philosophy and the Gospels, and secondly between bombastic eloquence and simplicity.⁸⁹ The purpose of De Petra's argument is to demonstrate that Longinus' treatise (like the Corinthian Epistles) does *not* teach this hollow rhetoric, but instead deals with 'true sublimity'. De Petra thus frames *Peri hypsous* as a treatise that is not incompatible with Christian ideas about rhetoric, and may also be relevant in discussions of biblical stylistics.⁹⁰

While Grotius and Heinsius brought Longinus into biblical scholarship, De Petra used passages from Scripture in his edition of *Peri hypsous* to frame the treatise as a text that transcends mere pagan rhetoric (without even mentioning Longinus' praise of Genesis). Each of these treatments of *Peri hypsous* in some way touches upon the confrontation between pagan and Christian rhetoric, and between bombastic eloquence and simplicity. *Peri hypsous* is used as a testimony of the majesty *and* simplicity of the bible, as well as a rejection of 'false sublimity' or stylistic excess. As such the discussion of Longinus' citation of Genesis and the reception of *Peri hypsous* in the context of biblical scholarship contain much of the ingredients that brought this debate to a boiling point in the (in)famous *Querelle du Fiat Lux* in the second half of the seventeenth century. Before moving on to the *Querelle*, I will elaborate on the question why Longinus' reference to Genesis was able to fulfil such a valuable argumentative function in biblical scholarship, by comparing the apologetic works of Hugo Grotius and his predecessor, Philippe du Plessis-Mornay.

3.3.5 Pagan testimony and Christian apologetics: Grotius and Du Plessis-Mornay

In his *Meletius* (and later in *De veritate religionis Christianae*), Grotius adduced Longinus' citation of Genesis as pagan testimony about the Bible. In compiling extraneous evidence for the Christian faith, Grotius followed an approach that other biblical scholars before him had already used. Among these scholars is Philippe du Plessis-Mornay (1549-1623), whose *De Veritate Religionis Christianae*

⁸⁹ See B.W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 145-228 about Paul's attitude towards rhetoric, as well as (pagan and Christian) sophists.

⁹⁰ That *Peri hypsous* was actually used in sermons in the seventeenth century has been demonstrated by Micha Lazarus (2019, forthcoming).

(1583) was one of Grotius' sources.⁹¹ Du Plessis-Mornay adduces the pagan testimonies about Scripture in order to underpin its greatness and veracity.⁹² In the context of these testimonies, Du Plessis-Mornay responds to the objection, raised by certain adversaries of the Christian faith, that if the Scripture were truly divine, it would surely not have been written in such a simple language.⁹³ Du Plessis-Mornay however asserts that:

Certe, quo igitur Lex simplicior, eo etiam aeterno Deo, rerumque Creatori convenientior: quippe quae, quo simplicior est, eo vocem eius, qui omnia potest, melius exprimit. Sed quod amplius est, quo simplicior, eo populo accommodatior quoque: nam quae omnibus promiscue data est, cibi quotidiani, seu mavis panis cibarii instar esse debet, ad omnium gustum, ad omnium palatum, accommodati: Quid si haec Scriptura in illa humilitate plus altitudinis habet, in illa simplicitate plus profunditatis, in illa nuditate plus illecebrarum, in illa ruditate plus vigoris et acuminis, quam quas maxime laudamus et miramur? Attende primum caput Geneseos: "Deus in principio creavit caelum et terram. Deus dixit, et aquae segregata sunt a terra, Deus iussit, et herbae producta sunt": Non est idiota quisquam, non rudis adeo ullus, qui haec non intelligat, quantum, inquam, ad salutem necesse est.⁹⁴

Surely, the simpler the Divine Law, the more convenient it is to the eternal God, the creator of all. Considering that the simpler she [the Law] is, the more apt she is at expressing his voice, which is almighty. But more

⁹¹ J.-P. Heering, 'Hugo Grotius' *De Veritate Religionis Christianae*', in: H.J.M. Nellen, and E. Rabbie (eds.), *Hugo Grotius Theologian. Essays in Honour of G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 41-52: 46; Posthumus Meyjes (1988), 70. Not every part of Grotius' work can be traced back directly to Du Plessis-Mornay, but both works do contain a particular argument about the relation between the Bible and pagan rhetoric.

⁹² P. Du Plessis-Mornay, *De veritate religionis Christianae* (Antwerp: C. Plantin, 1583), 559-596 (chapter 26, titled: *Quod quae in nostris Scripturis maxime mirabilia videntur, ab Ethnicis auctoribus confirmantur. Item praecipuae Obiectiones dissolvuntur*).

⁹³ Du Plessis-Mornay (1583), 562: *Harum Scripturarum stylus, simplex, nudus, rudis est. Si a Deo essent, longe aliter loquerentur*.

⁹⁴ Du Plessis-Mornay (1583), 563-564.

importantly, the simpler she is, the more suitable she is for the people as well. For what is given to all without distinction, should be like daily food, or rather like common bread: suitable for everyone's taste, everyone's palate. If this Scripture in her humility has more elevation, in her simplicity more depth, in her bareness more charm, in her roughness more strength and acumen, what could we praise and admire more than these characteristics? See for instance the first chapter of Genesis: "God in the beginning created heaven and earth. God spoke, and the waters were separated from the earth; God commanded, and plants were created. There is no layman, no one so uncultivated, who would not understand these things, to the extent necessary for his salvation.

Du Plessis-Mornay argued that the Bible gains its strength from its very simplicity with an argument that dwells on the apparent paradox of humility and elevation, simplicity and depth, bareness and charm, roughness and strength. In order to illustrate this, Du Plessis-Mornay referred to the first words of Genesis, which any man could understand. Du Plessis-Mornay furthermore explained that the simplicity of the Bible is important for conveying the divine truth.⁹⁵ While Du Plessis-Mornay could use pagan testimonies to the veracity of Bible's contents, he needed to defend the simple style of the Bible from pagan adversaries.

The discussion of pagan testimonies in relation to biblical stylistics, of which Du Plessis-Mornay, being one of Grotius' sources, is an important representative, constitutes the background against which Grotius included Longinus' quotation of Genesis in his *Meletius*. In the *Meletius* we find an argument very similar to that of Du Plessis-Mornay. Grotius adduced pagan testimonies about (the veracity of) the Bible, and argued that the style of the Bible is simple, so that it can be understood by anyone to the extent that is necessary for one's salvation.⁹⁶ Both Grotius and Du Plessis-Mornay moreover referred to the first verses of Genesis to illustrate their argument. Whereas Du Plessis-Mornay however defended Biblical simplicity from the criticism of pagan adversaries, Grotius could adduce a pagan source that

⁹⁵ Du Plessis-Mornay (1583), 564: *Adeo Scripturae simplicitas efficax est, tum ad humilium instructionem, tum ad confusionem superbiorum. In Bibliis habemus historias. In historia quid maxime laudamus? Veritatem. Est enim historiae essentia veritas: Veritatem vero quid magis indicat quam simplicitas?*

⁹⁶ Grotius, *Meletius* (ca. 1611), §55.

actually praises the style of the Bible. Grotius' interpretation of Longinus' *Fiat Lux* as an example of 'sublime simplicity', is thus to be explained from its appearance in this particular context: by widening Longinus' emphasis on 'great subject matter' to include 'simplicity of style' Grotius could defend Biblical simplicity by adducing the praise of a pagan.⁹⁷

Longinus' reference to Genesis appeared in the writings of at least eight early modern scholars (not counting the editions of *Peri hypsous*) between 1580 and 1650.⁹⁸ The conspicuousness of the example would suffice to attract special attention from anyone reading Longinus' treatise. The reference may however have enjoyed some fame as an autonomous example as well. While Caselius, Vossius, Caussin, Casaubon and Heinsius for instance refer to other parts of *Peri hypsous* as well (indicating their knowledge of more than just *Peri hypsous* 9.9), the appearance of Longinus' praise of Genesis in the works of Chamier, Keckermann and Grotius is quite singular and might indicate that the example gained prominence independently of Longinus' treatise. As I will argue in the next section, the works of Hugo Grotius contributed to the fame (or notoriety) of Longinus' praise of Genesis in and outside biblical scholarship, and thus played a role in the *Querelle du Fiat Lux*.

3.4 Biblical scholarship in the *Querelle du Fiat Lux*

The central role that Boileau gave to Longinus' citation of Genesis in his definition of the Longinian sublime, and the heated debate it spurred in the final decades of the seventeenth century, made the example into a *locus classicus* in critical discussions of the sublime. As I have shown in the previous section, the connection of 'greatness in subject matter' with 'simplicity or artlessness in expression' in this particular example was made explicit in early seventeenth-century biblical scholarship, especially in the works of Hugo Grotius and Daniel Heinsius. As I will show in the present section, the early seventeenth-century treatment of Longinus' citation of Genesis not only predated the *Querelle du Fiat Lux*, but also played a role in the development of its arguments. In order to do so, I will examine the various

⁹⁷ See also Till (2006), 133-165 on scholars like Flacius, Glassius, and Gerhard, who also reflected on the simplicity of the Bible.

⁹⁸ The appearances range from Caselius (1585) to Heinsius (1627).

stages of the *Querelle* and highlight the interpretative shifts that took place over the course of the debate, while reconstructing the quarrel's indebtedness to biblical scholarship, and particularly the work of Hugo Grotius.⁹⁹

3.4.1 From sublime to simple

The preface to Boileau's French translation of *Peri hypsous* (*Traité du sublime*), which featured Longinus' paraphrase of Genesis, was expanded and reissued multiple times in the decades after its first publication in 1674.¹⁰⁰ In the preface Boileau used the Genesis citation to elucidate Longinus' definition of 'the sublime'. The example served to illustrate the point that *le sublime* is not the same as *le stile sublime*. While the 'sublime style' requires grand words, the 'sublime' does not, as sublimity can be found in a single thought or phrase.¹⁰¹ Boileau illustrated this point by contrasting the *Fiat Lux* with a paraphrastic description of the biblical creation of light:

Par exemple. Le souverain Arbitre de la Nature d'une seule parole forma la lumiere. Voilà qui est dans le Stile Sublime: cela n'est pas néanmoins Sublime: parce qu'il n'y a rien là de fort merveilleux, et qu'un autre ne pût aisément trouver. Mais. Dieu dit: Que la lumière se fasse, et la lumière se fit. Ce tour extraordinaire d'expression qui marque si bien l'obéissance de la

⁹⁹ For an extensive reconstruction of the *Querelle du Fiat Lux* I refer to the discussions of Declercq (1994), 237-262 and Kerslake (2000), 41-63.

¹⁰⁰ Boileau's *Oeuvres*, which included the *Traité du sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours traduit du Grec de Longin*, were augmented in subsequent editions. In the 1683 edition Boileau had expanded his preface to the treatise to include a response to Pierre-Daniel Huet's criticism of Longinus. In 1694 an edition of the *Oeuvres* was published which included nine *Réflexions critiques sur quelques passages du rhéteur Longin*. In the 1701 edition the preface to the *Traité* was again extended with additional textual examples. In 1713 another three *Réflexions* (written around 1710) were added to the *Oeuvres*, including the famous *Réflexion X* about the sublime simplicity of the *Fiat Lux*. Later editions, such as the one published in 1718 also included the lengthy essay of Pierre-Daniel Huet and Jean Le Clerc on the subject (*Examen du sentiment de Longin sur ce passage de la Genese: et Dieu dit: que la lumiere soit faite et la lumiere fut faite, par Mr. Huet, ancien Evêque d'Avranches*), as well as Jean Le Clerc's *Remarques* on Boileau's *Réflexion X*.

¹⁰¹ Boileau (1674), 'Traité du Sublime', iiiiv. See also my discussion of this passage in the Introduction.

Créature aux ordres du Créateur est véritablement Sublime et a quelque chose de divin.¹⁰²

For example: 'The sovereign ruler of Nature has created light from a single word.' This is set in the sublime style, yet it is not sublime, because there is nothing miraculous in it, and nothing that someone else couldn't have thought of. But: 'God said: "Let there be light, and there was light."' That extraordinary way of expressing, which describes so well how the Creation obeys the rules of the Creator is truly sublime and has something divine.

By comparing these two accounts of the creation of light, Boileau aims to demonstrate that the biblical passage gains its power from something else than grand words, namely from a special quality that makes it marvellous and divine: the sublime. The element of simplicity is not yet explicitly attached to Longinus' *Fiat Lux*, although Boileau discusses the combination of sublimity and simplicity elsewhere in the preface, when discussing critics of his time who do not appreciate what Longinus estimates the most:

Ils chercheront souvent le Sublime dans le Sublime, et peut-estre se mocqueront-ils des exclamations que Longin fait quelquefois sur des passages, qui, bien que tres sublimes, ne laissent pas d'estre simples et naturels.¹⁰³

They often seek the sublime within the sublime, and they perchance mock the observations that Longinus sometimes makes about passages that, although they are very sublime, do not cease to be simple and natural.

By implication, Boileau's separation of 'the sublime' from 'the sublime style', allows for the combination of simple words and elevated subject matter.

Boileau would be prompted to elaborate on his interpretation of Longinus' Genesis citation by the critical remarks of the biblical scholars Pierre-Daniel Huet

¹⁰² Boileau (1674), 'Traité du Sublime', iiiiv.

¹⁰³ Boileau (1674), 'Traité du Sublime', iiiir.

(1630-1721) and later also Jean Le Clerc (1657-1736). In his *Demonstratio Evangelica* (1679) Huet included Longinus' citation of Genesis in a list of pagan testimonies about the books of Moses, and objected to the critic's interpretation of the passage as 'sublime'. According to Huet, Longinus had quoted the Genesis example as an example of 'sublime and figured' words (*sublimia et ἐσχηματισμένα*), in order to illustrate 'fullness of style' (*styli ἀδρότης*). Huet objected that although the subject matter is very great, the style of Genesis is very simple. Huet therefore suspects that Longinus has quoted this example from an intermediate source, for he would have grasped the simplicity of the passage if he had studied the book of Moses himself.¹⁰⁴ Huet thus rejects the validity of Longinus' interpretation of the *Fiat Lux*, by saying that it turns the opening of Genesis erroneously into a an illustration of rhetorical artistry and thus fails to appreciate the simplicity of Scripture. Huet attributes this lack of understanding to Longinus' inadequate knowledge of the books of Moses, which he probably did not read in the original Hebrew.

¹⁰⁴ Huet, *Demonstratio Evangelica* (Paris: S. Michallet, 1679), 54: Longinus, Zenobiae Palmyrenorum reginae à consiliis et studiis, criticae artis princeps, in aureolo libello Πεὶ ὕψους, eximio Mosem elogio exornat, nam Dei potestatem pro dignitate cognovisse et elocutum fuisse ait: quippe qui, inquit, initio legum Deum dixisse scribat: Fiat lux, et facta est, fiat terra, et facta est. Verumtamen quae hic tanquam sublimia et ἐσχηματισμένα affert è Mose Longinus, ut ejus styli ἀδρότητα approbet, simplicissima sunt. Rem quidem narrat Moses longe maximam, sed stylo λιτῶ. Atque hinc adducor ut credam, haec aliunde Longinum accepisse: nam si ad ipsos recurrisset fontes, et Mosis libros evolvisset, summam deprehendisset ubique χαρακτηρὸς ἰσχνότητα, quam persecutum esse Mosem puto, propter dignitatem materiae, quae doceri contenta respuit omnem ornatum ("Longinus, teacher of the critical arts to Zenobia, queen of the Palmyrenes, through advice and scholarship, has celebrated Moses in his golden booklet 'On the Sublime' with extraordinary praise, for he said that he [Moses] had recognised and expressed the power of God, since he, says Longinus, wrote at the beginning of his laws that God had said: 'Let there be light', and there was light; 'let there be earth', and there was earth. However, these words, which Longinus here quotes from Moses as being sublime and figurative, to illustrate the fullness of this style, are in fact very simple. Moses may be recounting the grandest subject matter, but he does so in a plain style. And hence I am inclined to believe that Longinus has taken these words from another source: for if he would have turned to the sources themselves, and read Moses' books, he would have recognised the highest simplicity of style everywhere, which I think Moses has sought to use, because of the dignity of the subject, which, because it is eager to be taught, rejects every ornament").

3.4.2 The connection with Augustine in the Port-Royal Bible

Boileau responded to the statements that Huet made in the *Demonstratio Evangelica* in an expanded version of his preface to the *Traité du sublime* (1683).¹⁰⁵ Boileau elaborated on his interpretation of Longinus' *Fiat Lux* and explained that he incorporated the citation in his preface because Longinus praised it too, even though he is a pagan.¹⁰⁶ Boileau expressed his astonishment that a scholar from his own time (Huet) would dare to reject Longinus' testimony about Scripture in a book that aims to demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion (Huet's *Demonstratio Evangelica*).¹⁰⁷ Boileau found himself supported by the makers of a recent translation of Genesis (*Port-Royal Bible, La Genèse traduite en François*, 1682) who included Longinus' pagan testimony in their preface.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, the preface to this translation provides a discussion of Longinus' citation of Genesis in the context of the 'sublime simplicity of the bible' (*simplicité sublime de l'Écriture*). The authors cited Boileau's statements on the *Fiat Lux* (as they appeared in 1674) and elaborated on them by referring to Augustine:

¹⁰⁵ Boileau-Despréaux, N., *Oeuvres Diverses du Sieur D. Avec le Traité du Sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours* (Amsterdam: A. Wolfgang, 1683), K 6^{r-v}.

¹⁰⁶ Boileau (1683), K 6^r: "J'ai raporté ces paroles de la Genese, comme l'expression la plus propre à mettre ma pensée en son jour, et je m'en suis servi d'autant plus volontiers que cette expression est citée avec éloge par Longin mesme, qui au milieu des ténèbres du Paganisme n'a pas laissé de reconnoistre le divin qu'il y avoit dans ces paroles de l'Ecriture."

¹⁰⁷ Boileau (1683), K 6^{r-v}: "Mais que dirons-nous d'un Sçavant de ce siecle qui quoi qu'éclairé des lumieres de l'Evangile, ne s'est pas apperceu de la beauté de cet endroit, a osé, dis-je, avancer dans un Livre qu'il a fait pour démonstrer la Religion Chrestienne, que Longin s'estoit trompé lorsqu'il avoit crû que ces paroles estoient sublimes?"

¹⁰⁸ Boileau (1683), K 6^v: "J'ai la satisfaction au moins que des personnes non moins considerables par leur pieté que par leur grand sçavoir, qui nous ont donné depuis peu la traduction du Livre de la Genese, n'ont pas esté de l'avis de ce Sçavant, et dans leur Preface, entre plusieurs preuves excellentes qu'ils ons apportées pour faire voir que c'est l'Esprit saint qui a dicté ce livre, ont allegué le passage de Longin, pour montrer combien les Chrestiens doivent estre persuadez d'une verité si claire, et qu'un Payen mesme a sentie par les seules lumieres de la raison." The translators of Genesis refer to Longinus in their preface (§2.3), as well as in the notes to Genesis 1.3: *La Genèse traduite en François. Avec l'explication du sens litteral & du sens spirituel* (Lyon: Anisson & Posuel, 1682), 13. See also Declercq (1994), 259-260 on this French translation of the Bible in the context of the *Querelle*.

On a rapporté ailleurs ce que S. Augustin a dit de l'excellence et de la majesté du stile des auteurs sacrez. Ils ont esté éloquentes, dit ce Saint, sans penser à l'estre. Leur élévation a esté simple, et leur simplicité élevée. La grandeur de leurs pensées a donné du poids et de la dignité à leurs paroles. Ils ont trouvé moyen de faire admirer, et ce qui est encore plus, de faire révéler ce qu'ils disoient, sans qu'il paroisse aucune trace de la moindre étude dans leurs discours; et au lieu que les hommes du monde ont suivi l'éloquence, l'éloquence a suivi ces hommes de Dieu.¹⁰⁹

We have reported elsewhere what St Augustine has said about the excellence and majesty of the style of the sacred authors. They were eloquent, without actively reflecting on it. Their elevation was simple, and their simplicity elevated. The grandeur of their thoughts has given their words weight and dignity. They have found a way to induce admiration, and even more, to induce great respect for what they said, without showing a trace of any education in their speech; and instead of the men of the world following eloquence, eloquence has followed these men of God.

The writers of the preface are referring to the view of St Augustine in his work *De doctrina Christiana*, in which the author applied and adjusted pagan rhetoric (especially Cicero's *Orator*).¹¹⁰ Augustine applies the three *genera dicendi* that Cicero assigned to three *officia oratoris* (*probare, delectare, flectere*) to the three domains of Christian rhetoric: the low style is reserved for exegesis, the middle style for praise, blame and admonition, and the high style for stirring the emotions.¹¹¹ Augustine however abolishes the principle of *aptum* that Cicero adhered to and which dictates congruence between subject matter and style – since the subject matter of Scripture is always great, it may well occur that something majestic is set in a

¹⁰⁹ *La Genèse traduite en François* (1682), preface, §2.3.

¹¹⁰ See for instance Till (2006), 57-60.

¹¹¹ Cicero, *Orator* 69; *De doctrina Christiana* IV.74-77. See R.P.H. Green, *Augustine. De Doctrina Christiana* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), xx-xxi and 231-229; Till (2006), 57; G.A. Kennedy, *Classical rhetoric & its Christian & secular tradition from ancient to modern times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 114.

simple style.¹¹² The translators of the Port-Royal Bible thus interpreted Boileau's statements in terms of Augustine's ideas about sublime simplicity.

That Boileau was receptive to this interpretation as well as to Huet's remarks is visible in Boileau's elaborations in the subsequent editions of his preface to Longinus' treatise. In the 1683 edition Boileau additionally mentioned that Longinus was a pagan, a point that had been emphasised by Huet in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*. Furthermore, in the 1701 version of the preface Boileau elaborated on the point of (sublime) simplicity, which had been important to Huet as well as the translators of the Port-Royal Bible. In this edition Boileau sought to substantiate his claim about the division of *le sublime* from *le stile sublime* with another example (besides the *Fiat Lux*), taken from a contemporary author: Pierre Corneille. Boileau quotes a passage from Corneille's tragedy *Horace*, in which the old Horace, angered by the cowardly deeds of his son, utters the wish: Qu'il mourût! ("That he had died!").¹¹³ For Boileau the sublimity of these words springs from their simplicity and naturalness.¹¹⁴ In thus expanding his preface, Boileau increased the emphasis on the connection between sublimity and simplicity.

3.4.3 Huet's objections and Grotius' De veritate religionis Christianae

Huet's remarks have often been interpreted as a direct response to the preface of Boileau's *Traité du sublime*. In their discussions of the 'Querelle' Jules Brody, Robert

¹¹² Debora Shuger's work *Sacred Rhetoric* (1988) is an important contribution to the study of early modern discussions of biblical stylistics. In her book she traces the development of the 'passionate plain style' as part of the 'Christian grand style' in the early modern period.

¹¹³ Corneille, *Horace*, Act III, scene 6. For a discussion of the *qu'il mourût* in Boileau, see Doran (2015), 120-123.

¹¹⁴ N. Boileau-Despréaux, *Oeuvres Diverses du Sieur D. Avec le Traité du Sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours* (Paris: D. Thierry, 1701), 'Traité du Sublime', 12-13: "il n'y a personne qui ne sente la grandeur heroïque qui est renfermée dans ce mot 'Qu'il mourût', qui est d'autant plus sublime qu'il est simple et naturel, et que par là on voit que c'est du fond du coeur que parle ce vieux Heros, et dans les transports d'une colere vraiment Romaine. De fait la chose auroit beaucoup perdu de sa force si au lieu de 'Qu'il mourût', il avoit dit, 'Qu'il suivist l'exemple de ses deux freres', ou, 'Qu'il sacrifiait sa vie à l'interest et à la gloire de son pays'. Ainsi c'est la simplicité mesme de ce mot qui en fait la grandeur." The comparison with a paraphrase of the quotation in the sublime style mirrors Boileau's paraphrase of the *Fiat Lux* for the purpose of demonstrating that its sublimity does not spring from the use of elevated words.

Doran and Anthony Ossa-Richardson for instance suggest that Huet's objection to Longinus' interpretation of the *Fiat Lux* was prompted by Boileau's treatment of the passage.¹¹⁵ The reconstructions of the 'Querelle' presented by Gilles Declercq and Lawrence Kerslake however assume that the debate started only when Boileau took notice of Huet's remarks in the *Demonstratio*.¹¹⁶ So was the publication of the *Traité* Huet's primary incentive to criticise Longinus' interpretation of the *Fiat Lux*?

It surely deserves to be noticed that Huet neither mentions Boileau, nor the *Traité*. Another, more pressing issue is the fact that Huet's remarks seem to be a rather inadequate response to Boileau's interpretation of the *Fiat Lux*. Boileau had used the Genesis citation to illustrate that 'the sublime' is something else than 'sublimity of style'. Boileau and Huet, we may speculate, would actually have agreed that the passage from Genesis is powerful *not* because it uses stylistical devices, but because it conveys something great and dignified. According to Huet however, Longinus has used the Genesis citation to illustrate 'fullness of style' (styli ἄδρεσις), thereby failing to appreciate that they are actually set in a 'plain style' (stylus λιτός) and exemplify 'simplicity of style' (χαρακτῆρος ἰσχνότης). By reading Longinus' treatise as a discussion of the high style in writing, Huet completely misses the point that Boileau was making, namely that Longinus' notion of sublimity is something *else* than the 'sublime style'.¹¹⁷ We may suspect that Huet would have constructed his argument somewhat differently if he only meant to refute Boileau.

Some years later, in his letter to Le Duc de Montausier (1706), Huet expressed his bewilderment about Boileau's attack, and said that he would never have thought that their intellectual paths would cross.¹¹⁸ He knew that Boileau had

¹¹⁵ Brody (1958), 50; Doran (2015), 116; Ossa-Richardson (2014), 75.

¹¹⁶ Declercq (1994), 238; Kerslake (2000), 45.

¹¹⁷ That Boileau and Huet are missing each other's points has been noted for instance by Litman (1971), 89, Ossa-Richardson (2014) and Doran (2015), 115-120.

¹¹⁸ Huet, P-D., 'Lettre de M. Huet à M. le Duc de Montausier, Dans laquelle il examine le sentiment de Longin sur le passage de la Genèse: Et Dieu dit: Que la lumière soit faite, et la lumière fut faite', in: Le Clerc, *Bibliothèque Choisie* (1706), vol. 10, 211-260: 216-217: Ainsi à dire la verité, je fus un peu surpris, lorsqu'ayant trouvé l'autre jour sur votre table la nouvelle Edition de ses Oeuvres, à l'ouverture du Livre je tombai sur ces paroles ... [followed by a citation of Boileau's attack on Huet]. Je fus surpris, dis-je, de ce discours, Monseigneur; car nous avons pris des routes si différentes, dans le país des Lettres,

worked on Longinus, but he was surprised to learn that Boileau had taken his critical note on Longinus as a personal offence.¹¹⁹ Moreover, in the letter Huet also explained why he commented upon Longinus in the first place. Ever since Huet had first read Longinus, he was shocked that the author had chosen the *Fiat Lux* as an example of the sublime.¹²⁰ Huet came across Longinus' citation of Genesis while studying the ancient testimonies about the book of Moses, and found it necessary to refute Longinus' interpretation publicly as it seemed clear to him that the critic had mischaracterised the Mosaic account of creation.¹²¹ Even if Huet's astonishment about Boileau's polemical reaction is feigned, and his discussion of Longinus in the *Demonstratio* was indeed meant as a reaction to Boileau's preface, Huet at least formulates a second incentive for his statements about *Peri hypsous* 9.9: the presence of Longinus' citation among the ancient testimonies about Scripture, and Longinus' (perceived) mischaracterisation of Moses' text.

In Huet's time, Moses and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch had recently become a hotly debated issue after the publication of Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670). In the *Tractatus*, Spinoza had argued that Moses could not have been the author of the Pentateuch, and that the Mosaic law was rather the political law of the Israelite society, rather than a truly divine law.¹²² As such,

Mr. Despréaux et moi, que je ne croyois pas le rencontrer jamais, dans mon chemin, et que je pensois être hors des atteintes de sa redoutable Critique.

¹¹⁹ Huet, 'Lettre', in: Le Clerc (1706), 215-216: Quoique je susse bien que Mr. Despréaux avoit travaillé sur Longin, que j'eusse même lû son Ouvrage, et qu'après l'avoir examiné soigneusement, j'en eusse fait le jugement qu'il mérite, je ne crus pas qu'il eût pris cet auteur sous la protection, et qu'il se fut lié si étroitement d'interêt avec lui, que de reprendre cet Auteur ce fût lui faire une offense; non plus qu'à trois ou quatre Savans Hommes, qui l'ont traduit avant lui.

¹²⁰ Huet, 'Lettre', in: Le Clerc (1706), 213: Dès la première lecture, que je fis de Longin, je fus choqué de cette remarque, et il ne me parut pas, que le passage de Moïse fût bien choisi, pour un exemple du Sublime.

¹²¹ Huet, 'Lettre', in: Le Clerc (1706), 214: aiant entrepris le dénombrement des Auteurs Profanes, qui ont rendu témoignage à l'antiquité des Livres de Moïse, je trouvai Longin parmi eux, et parce qu'il ne rapportoit ce qu'il dit de lui, que sur la foi d'autrui, je me sentis obligé de tenir compte au Public de cette conjecture, et de lui en dire la principale raison; qui est, que s'il avoit vû ce qui suit et ce qui précède le passage de Moïse, qu'il allègue, il auroit bien-tôt reconnu qu'il n'a rien de sublime.

¹²² B. De Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Hamburg: H. Künraht [= J. Rieuwertsz], 1670). See S. Frankel, 'The Invention of Liberal Theology: Spinoza's Theological-Political Analysis of Moses and Jesus', *The Review of Politics* 62-63 (2001), 287-315: 293-297.

Moses was rather a secular leader than a divinely inspired prophet. In this context a reference to Moses by a pagan in a rhetorical work is somewhat tricky, as it (seemingly) brings Moses into the sphere of pagan rhetoric and political shrewdness, rather than divine inspiration. According to Huet, Longinus presents Moses' words as 'elevated and figurative' (*sublimia et ἐσχηματισμένα*), characteristics that befit secular rhetoric more than the simplicity and perspicuity usually attributed to the Bible. Huet therefore argued that Longinus must have adopted the citation from an intermediate source and not from a direct reading of the original Hebrew. One of Huet's claims in the *Demonstratio Evangelicae* is that the Old Testament, including the Books of Moses are authentic.¹²³ Huet underpins this by presenting an extensive list of pagan authorities, including Longinus. In trying to demonstrate convincingly that the Old Testament is authentic, Huet needed to separate the problematic evidence from the reliable sources. Ignoring Longinus' citation altogether moreover was not an option. Partly because of the increased attention it would have gotten from Boileau's preface, but certainly also because it had already acquired a firm place among the ancient pagan testimonies about Scripture in biblical scholarship, the most famous example of which would be Hugo Grotius' *De veritate religionis Christianae*.

Grotius' *De veritate religionis Christianae*, probably his most famous work in the seventeenth century, was conceived in 1620 as a didactic poem in Dutch, while Grotius was imprisoned at Loevestein castle for his remonstrant views.¹²⁴ The first Latin edition (in prose) of the treatise was published in 1627, and was followed by many reprints, new editions and translations in the subsequent decades.¹²⁵ The work, apologetic in nature, presents a variety of proofs for the truth of the

¹²³ Huet's *Demonstratio Evangelica* was at least partly a reaction to Spinoza's assertions. See H.G. Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation, Volume 4: From the Enlightenment to the Twentieth Century* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 110-122 and J. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 453-456.

¹²⁴ Heering (1994), 42-44.

¹²⁵ See J.J.V.M. de Vet, 'Jean Leclerc, An Enlightened Propagandist of Grotius' *'De veritate religionis Christianae'*, *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis / Dutch Review of Church History* 64.2 (1984), 160-195: 160-161 and the bibliographical index of J. ter Meulen, and P.J.J. Diermanse, *Bibliographie des écrits imprimés de Hugo Grotius* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1950), 467-536.

Christian faith.¹²⁶ A part of Grotius' evidence consists of pagan testimonies about Scripture. The 1627 latin edition of *De veritate* included Longinus in a list of pagan testimonies about Moses.¹²⁷ The edition of 1640 is expanded with an appendix of explanatory notes (*annotata*) to the text of *De veritate*, in which Longinus' citation of Genesis is quoted at length.

Et post eos Dionysius Longinus] Vixit is tempore Aureliani Imperatoris gratus Zenobiae Palmyrenorum Reginae. Is in libro de sublimi dicendi genere, cum dixisset de Deo loquentes curare debere, ut eum nobis magnum sincerumque et impermixtum exhibeant: ταύτη καὶ ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεσμοθέτης, οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐχώρησε κατέφηνεν, εὐθὺς ἐν τῇ εἰσβολῇ γράψας τῶν νόμων· εἶπεν ὁ Θεός, φησί· τί· γενέσθω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο· γενέσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγένετο. Sic egit et is qui Iudaeis leges condidit, vir minimae vulgaris ingenii, ut qui Dei potestatem digne et conceperit et elocutus fuerit, statim in principio legum haec scribens. Dixit, ait, Deus. Quid? Fiat lux: et facta est. Fiat terra: et facta est.¹²⁸

And after them Dionysius Longinus] He lived in the time of Emperor Aurelian, as a protégé of Zenobia, Queen of the Palmyrenes. He wrote this in his book 'On the sublime', when he had stressed that those who speak about God should make sure that they present him to us as great and pure and uncontaminated: So too, the lawgiver of the Jews [Moses], not just any man, after he had formed a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it, writing at the very beginning of his Laws, declared: "God said"- what? "'let there be light,' and there was light, 'Let there be earth', and there was earth" [followed by a Latin translation of the Greek].

¹²⁶ De Vet (1984) 161-162, and J.-P. Heering, 'The Sources of Grotius's *De Veritate Religionis Christianae*', *Grotiana* 35 (2014), 53-65.

¹²⁷ H. Grotius, *De veritate religionis Christianae* (Paris: J. Ruart, 1627), 28: *Meminerunt Mosis et Diodorus Siculus, et Strabo, et Plinius, Tacitus quoque, et post eos Dionysius Longinus de sermonis sublimitate* ("Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Pliny, Tacitus too, and after them Longinus in 'On the Sublime' have reported about Moses").

¹²⁸ H. Grotius, *De veritate religionis Christianae* (Leiden: J. Maire, 1640), *annotata ad librum I*, 122-123.

Grotius moreover also mentions Longinus' quotation of Genesis in his *Annotationes in libros Evangeliorum* (1641) and in his *Annotata ad Vetus Testamentum* (1644).¹²⁹ Grotius' *De veritate religionis Christianae* was translated into several languages and widely disseminated throughout Europe.¹³⁰ In 1636 and 1644 for instance two different French translations of the *De veritate* were published.¹³¹ Grotius may hence have been one of the main disseminators of Longinus' *Fiat Lux* in seventeenth-century biblical scholarship.¹³²

Huet refers to Grotius' work several times in his *Demonstratio Evangelica* and his incorporation of a list of ancient sources about the Bible harkens back to Grotius' overview of testimonies in *De veritate religionis Christianae*. We may recall that Huet himself said that he came across Longinus' citation when studying the ancient testimonies about the Books of Moses.¹³³ Grotius' work would be a logical place to start such an investigation. It seems very likely therefore that Huet's rejection of

¹²⁹ H. Grotius, *Annotationes in libros Evangeliorum* (Amsterdam: J. and C. Blaeu, 1641), 170: *Nam et Moses creationem ita descriperat: Et dixit Deus fiat lux et facta est lux: quibus in verbis majestatem esse miram et σεμνότητα λόγου recte animadvertit paganus homo Longinus rhetor cujus haec sunt verba: ταύτη καὶ ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεοσμοθέτης, οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐγνώρισε καξέφηγεν, εὐθύς ἐν τῇ εισβολῇ γραψας τῶν νόμων "εἶπεν ὁ Θεός", φησί, —τί; "γενέσθω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο· γενέσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγένετο. H. Grotius, *Annotata ad Vetus Testamentum* (Paris: S. and G. Cramoisy, 1644), I, 2: *Dixitque Deus: Fiat Lux et facta est lux*] *De his verbis vide Dionysii Longini locum, quem in dictis Annotatis protulimus.**

¹³⁰ De Vet (1984), 160-161 and Heering (1994), 42-44.

¹³¹ H. Grotius, *Traicté de la vérité de la religion chrestienne. Traduit du Latin de l'auteur* (Amsterdam: J. Blaeu, 1636); H. Grotius, *La vérité de la religion chrestienne* (Paris: P. Moreau, 1644). See Heering (2004), 223-227.

¹³² That Grotius' reference to Longinus was quite widely known can for instance be deduced from a remark of Tanneguy Le Fèvre in his edition of Longinus' text (Saumur, 1663). In his note to Longinus' citation of Genesis Le Fèvre referred to Hugo Grotius, who had written ἐχώρησε (to contain; to comprehend) instead of ἐγνώρισε (to make known; to discover) in his rendering of the citation, and translated the Greek accordingly. Le Fèvre (1663), 282: ἐγνώρισε καξέφηγεν] *Vir illustrissimus et harum litterarum longe maximum decus Hugo Grotius, in lib. de veritate Religionis Christianae, hunc ipsum locum producens, non ἐγνώρισε, ut ubique scribitur, sed ἐχώρησε, legerat. Ita enim convertit* [followed by a quotation of Grotius' translation]. The textual variant renders different Latin translations: Le Fèvre translates ἐγνώρισε with *notam fecit* (*notam facere*; 'to make known'), while Grotius translates ἐχώρησε with *conceperit* (*concupere*, 'to comprehend'). Interestingly, both variants are found in Grotius' works, too: we find ἐχώρησε in *Meletius* (ca. 1611) and *De veritate* (1640), but ἐγνώρισε in the *Annotationes in libros Evangeliorum* (1641). See also note 56 above.

¹³³ Huet, 'Lettre', in: Le Clerc (1706), 214, see above note 121.

Longinus' interpretation of the *Fiat Lux* in the *Demonstratio Evangelica* is the result of a discussion that started with Hugo Grotius' inclusion of Longinus' *Fiat Lux* in the *De veritate*.¹³⁴

3.4.4 Huet and Le Clerc (1706), Boileau's *Réflexion X* (1713), and Tollius

The quarrel progressed as Jean Le Clerc published a reaction to Boileau's statements in his *Bibliothèque choisie* (1706), which included a letter on the subject written in 1683 by Pierre-Daniel Huet.¹³⁵ Le Clerc quotes Huet's letter while interweaving comments of his own. Their objections can be summarised in three main points: 1. Christians have appropriated Longinus' appraisal of the Genesis passage in their own evaluations of Scripture, because they thought it wrong not to appreciate those aspects of Scripture that even a pagan admired.¹³⁶ Huet and Le Clerc however depict Longinus as someone who had no knowledge of Scripture at all, and who had borrowed the Genesis passage from an intermediate source, which they considered to be evident from the deviant form in which Longinus presents the citation.¹³⁷ Longinus' mischaracterisation of the *Fiat Lux* is thus attributed to his pagan background. 2. Both Le Clerc and Huet take Longinus' treatise to be a treatment of the sublime style in writing and hence cannot accept his (and Boileau's) reference to Genesis as 'sublime'. They consider Longinus' rhetorical approach to Scripture as inadmissible, since the Bible's divine message transcends human instruments such as rhetorical skill, as has been argued for

¹³⁴ Huet mentions Grotius several times in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*. That the primary issue in biblical scholarship was Longinus' authority, rather than his characterisation of the biblical text as sublime, is corroborated by a note added to the reissued edition of Grotius' *De veritate* by Jean Le Clerc (1709): *Serius vixit Longinus, quam ut ejus auctoritate niti possimus, praeterquam quod ab Epistolis fuit Zenobiae, mulieri Judaeae* ("Longinus lived too late for us to rely on his authority, except for what is known from the letters of Zenobia, a Jewish woman").

¹³⁵ Huet, P-D., 'Lettre de M. Huet à M. le Duc de Montausier, Dans laquelle il examine le sentiment de Longin sur le passage de la Genèse: Et Dieu dit: Que la lumière soit faite, et la lumière fut faite', in: Le Clerc, *Bibliothèque Choisie* (1706), vol. 10, 211-260.

¹³⁶ Le Clerc, Huet, 'Examen du sentiment de Longin sur ce passage de la Genese: & Dieu dit: que la lumiere soit faite et la lumiere fut faite, par Mr. Huet, ancien Evêque d'Avranches' in: Le Clerc, J., *Bibliothèque Choisie* (1706), vol. 10, 211-260: 222-225.

¹³⁷ Le Clerc, Huet, 'Examen', in: Le Clerc (1706), 225 and 231-234. It is stressed repeatedly in the *Examen* that only someone who has read Genesis in the original Hebrew, can appreciate it properly.

instance by Augustine (*De doctrina Christiana*) and St Paul (2 Corinthians).¹³⁸ Longinus is accused of reading rhetorical devices into the passage and even adding a figure of his own, by inserting τί; ('what'; French: 'quoi') into the citation. Huet and Le Clerc argue that anyone studying Genesis in Hebrew would have seen that the passage is made up of ordinary words and that the repetition ("God said: 'let there be [x], and there was [x]'"') is a common occurrence in the Hebrew Bible (and even the Quran).¹³⁹ The fact that Longinus did not read the Genesis passage in the original Hebrew, but in Greek, thus led him to mistake the passage for a figured expression. For Huet and Le Clerc the application of Greek rhetorical theory to the Bible is plain wrong. 3. On top of this, Huet (seconded by Le Clerc) argues that Longinus' idea of sublimity is entirely inadequate. According to Huet, four types of sublimity should be discerned: i. *Le sublime des termes* (sublimity resulting from the choice of beautiful and grand words); ii. *Le sublime du tour d'expression* (sublimity resulting from the striking arrangement of words); iii. *Le sublime des pensées* (sublimity springing from the author's lofty thoughts); iv. *Le sublime des choses* (sublimity inherent to the subject matter).¹⁴⁰ Huet asserts that it is a common mistake to confuse these different types of sublimity. Longinus, Boileau and the Dutch scholar Jacobus Tollius (who had refuted Huet in his 1694 edition of Longinus) are then accused of confusing *le sublime des choses* with *le sublime de l'art* (which includes *le sublime des termes, du tour d'expression* and *des pensées*), and of mixing up inherent sublimity with rhetorical sublimity.

The Dutch scholar Jacobus Tollius (1633-1696) (whose work will be discussed more extensively in Chapter Five), incurred the criticism of Huet because of his discussion of Longinus' *Fiat Lux* in his edition of Longinus (1694). In the commentary to Longinus' text, Tollius endorsed Boileau's opinion:

Dixerat Longinus sectione octava inter quinque sublimitatis fontes esse primum et praestantissimum τὸ περὶ τὰς νοήσεις ἀδρεπήβολον; in quo τοῖς ἐσχηματισμένοις nullus locus est, sed sola respicitur dignitas

¹³⁸ This point also relates to the question whether god actually spoke when creating heaven and earth (the idea of *anthropotheia*). See Ossa-Richardson (2014) for the role of Longinus' reference to Genesis in the late seventeenth-century discussion of this topic.

¹³⁹ Le Clerc, Huet, 'Examen', in: Le Clerc (1706), 239-241.

¹⁴⁰ Le Clerc, Huet, 'Examen', in: Le Clerc (1706), 245-254.

sententiae ad rei magnitudinum convenienter expressae. Potest autem etiam in tenui genere saepe occurrere sententia sublimis et elata, quam non tam studium, quam ipsa rei magnitudo exprimat. Distinguendum vero inter quaesitam dedita opera, arteque arcessitam sublimitatem, et illam, quae iudicio exquisito, ubi res poposcerit admittitur. In hoc igitur Moysis loco et res maxima est, et ex merito a Moyse expressa. Non consistit hic in elocutionis, seu potius verborum, amplitudine τὸ ὕψος, (verba enim εὐτελέστατα sunt) sed in ipso sensu: et hoc est, quod Longinus volebat, Moysem dignum ipsa rei magnitudine sensum protulisse: cujusmodi sensum etiam nudum sine verbis nonnumquam, ut in Ajacis silentio, sublimem esse dixerat.¹⁴¹

Longinus has said in his eighth chapter that the first and foremost of the five sources of sublimity is the power of forming great conceptions; in which there is no room for embellishments. Instead, one should observe the dignity of the thought which is expressed in a way fit for the magnitude of the subject. But it is possible that even in a simple style a sublime and elevated thought often occurs, which is not so much expressed through effort but rather by the very magnitude of the subject. Indeed, there is a difference between sublimity sought after by diligent labour or obtained by art, and that kind of sublimity which is admitted by ripe judgment whenever the subject matter demands it. In this passage of Moses thus the subject matter is not only great itself, but it is also worthily expressed by Moses. In this case sublimity does not spring from the copiousness of its style, or rather words (for the words are extremely simple), but from its very meaning: and this is what Longinus meant, namely that Moses has brought forth a worthy thought because of the greatness of the subject itself. For this reason he asserted that even a bare thought without words, like Ajax' silence, is sometimes sublime.

Tollius, following Boileau and explicitly refuting Huet's claim that Longinus portrayed the words of Moses as ἐσχηματισμένος ('figured', 'embellished'), states

¹⁴¹ Tollius (1694), 62.

that the Longinian sublime does not spring from diligent labour or art (*dedita opera* or *ars*), but from a great thought that worthily expresses the greatness of the subject matter. This is not due to the copiousness of its style, or words (*elocutionis seu verborum amplitudo*), but rather the meaning itself (*sensus ipse*). Sublimity can therefore also be set in a simple style (*genus tenue*). Tollius supports his interpretation with evidence from Longinus' treatise itself. He points out that, according to Longinus, 'greatness of thought' is the most important of the five sources of the sublime (*Peri hypsous* 8.1), and adduces Longinus' assertion that "judgment in literature is the ultimate fruit of ripe experience" (*Peri hypsous* 6).¹⁴² Tollius moreover states that Moses' words are extremely simple (or even 'very cheap'), and supports this claim by referring to Longinus' treatment of Ajax's refusal to speak to Odysseus in the *Odyssey* (*Peri hypsous* 9.2).¹⁴³ Tollius' treatment of this passage, which harkens back to Boileau's explanation and likewise mixes up the various *genera dicendi* (*genus tenue* and *genus sublime*) exemplifies how the reconciliation of simplicity and sublimity (or the separation of the sublime from the sublime style) found its way into Longinian scholarship.

In the *Examen* Huet and Le Clerc thus argue that the Genesis passage is simple in diction and style, yet grand in subject matter, and that Longinus could not understand this combination because he is a pagan rhetorician. Although Huet's points are in fact not that far removed from the ideas of his adversaries – Longinus, Boileau and Tollius all stress in some way that the sublimity of the Genesis passage arises from its subject matter –, Huet simply cannot accept that the *Fiat Lux* could be presented as an example of the 'sublime' in a treatise that, in his eyes, discusses the rules of Greek rhetoric.

Spurred on by the criticisms of Huet and Le Clerc, Boileau made his interpretation of Longinus' *Fiat Lux* even more explicit in his *Réflexion X* (written in 1710 but published in 1713). In this essay Boileau again emphasises that the *Fiat Lux* is not sublime in a stylistical sense (*le stile sublime*), but in terms of its effect, while the idea of 'sublime simplicity' is made even more explicit. Addressing Le Clerc¹⁴⁴, Boileau writes:

¹⁴² *Peri hypsous* 6: ἡ γὰρ τῶν λόγων κρίσις πολλῆς ἐστὶ πείρας τελευταῖον ἐπιγένημα.

¹⁴³ Hom. *Od.* 11.543-67.

¹⁴⁴ Boileau explains that he addresses Le Clerc in his *Réflexion X* because he respects Huet so much, see Boileau, 'Réflexion X' (1713), 277.

N'avois-je pas prévenu votre objection, en assûrant, comme je l'assûre dans cette même Préface, que par Sublime, en cet endroit, Longin n'entend pas ce que nous appelons le stile sublime; mais cet extraordinaire et ce merveilleux qui se trouve souvent dans les paroles les plus simples, et dont la simplicité même fait quelquefois la sublimité?¹⁴⁵

Did I not anticipate your objection by emphasising, as I have emphasised in that same preface, that by 'sublime' Longinus did not mean what we call 'the sublime style'; but that extraordinary and marvellous quality which is often found in the simplest of words, and of which the simplicity itself sometimes makes for the sublimity?

Boileau here repeats the point that he has made in the preface to the earlier editions of the *Traité*, but with a modification: Boileau now explicitly states that the sublime can be found in simple words, and that simplicity itself may contribute to the sublimity of a given passage. Boileau's *Réflexion X* thus provides an explicit elaboration of the idea of 'sublime simplicity'.¹⁴⁶

The combination of 'simple' and 'grand' or even of 'sublimity *through* simplicity' gained increasing prominence as the *Querelle* developed. Boileau did not yet analyse the *Fiat Lux* explicitly in terms of 'simplicity' in the first edition of his preface to the *Traité* (1674). Pierre-Daniel Huet however, in his criticism of Longinus in the *Demonstratio Evangelica* (1679) refuted Longinus' interpretation of the Genesis passage as 'sublime' by asserting that the *Fiat Lux* is characterised by 'a grand simplicity' (*une grande simplicité*). The preface to the 1682 translation of Genesis in the Port-Royal Bible in turn connected Boileau's statements about the *Fiat Lux* with Augustine's ideas on the elevated simplicity of the sacred authors: "their elevation was simple, and their simplicity elevated" (*leur élévation a esté simple, et leur simplicité élevée*). Boileau's next edition of the *Traité* (in 1683)

¹⁴⁵ Boileau, 'Réflexion X' (1713), 279-280.

¹⁴⁶ See also: Boileau, 'Réflexion X' (1713), 279: "Car si vous l'aviez lû, si vous l'aviez examiné un peu de près, me diriez-vous, comme vous faites, pour montrer que ces paroles, "Dieu dit", etc. n'ont rien de sublime, qu'elles ne sont point dans le stile sublime; sur ce qu'il n'y a point de grans mots, et qu'elles sont énoncées avec une très-grande simplicité?" Boileau, 'Réflexion X' (1713), 280: "Le sublime n'étant point opposé au simple, et n'y aiant rien quelquefois de plus sublime que le simple même."

responded to Huet's statements in the *Demonstratio* and referred to *La Genèse traduite*. In the 1701 edition of the *Traité* Boileau added an example from Corneille's *Horace*, and argues that "the very simplicity of the passage makes for its grandeur" (*c'est la simplicité mesme de ce mot qui en fait la grandeur*). Provoked by Le Clerc's publication of the *Examen* (1706), which included a letter by Huet on the subject, Boileau responded with a lengthy essay on the topic, his *Réflexion X* (1713), in which 'simplicity' becomes an almost indispensable prerequisite for the sublime.¹⁴⁷

In late seventeenth-century scholarship, the inclusion of simplicity as an element of the Longinian sublime thus resulted to a great extent from the influence of biblical scholarship. The translators of the Port-Royal Bible made a connection with the sublime simplicity as described by Augustine, while Huet, urged by Grotius inclusion of Longinus' praise of Moses among pagan testimonies on the Bible, as well as Spinoza' rejection of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, also stressed the simplicity of Moses' account of creation.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that Longinus' reference to Genesis was interpreted as an example of 'sublime simplicity' already in the first half of the seventeenth century. The early seventeenth-century connection of Longinus' *Fiat Lux* with simplicity was enabled because of its place in the treatise itself, as an example of 'greatness of thought', and developed under the influence of discussions in biblical scholarship about the simplicity of the Bible. Early seventeenth-century scholars used Longinus' reference to Genesis as an example of greatness of thought, as well as pagan testimony about the Bible. In using Longinus' quotation of Genesis to support a certain argument in their biblical scholarship, Hugo Grotius and Daniel Heinsius drew attention to the fact that in Longinus' theory sublimity and simplicity can be combined.

This interpretation of *Peri hypsous* is usually associated with Boileau's discussion of the *Fiat Lux* in the preface to his translation of Longinus' treatise (1674), and the debate that took place in subsequent decades between Boileau and the biblical scholars Pierre-Daniel Huet and Jean Le Clerc. Considering the

¹⁴⁷ See also Kerslake (2000), 41-63 for the increasing importance of simplicity in the *Querelle du Fiat Lux*.

reception of Longinus' *Fiat Lux* in early seventeenth-century scholarship, this development already took place decades earlier when Longinus' citation of Genesis was discussed by Grotius and Heinsius. As I have moreover argued in this chapter, Hugo Grotius' reference to Longinus' citation of Genesis in the *De veritate religionis Christianae* played an important role in the early stages of the *Querelle du Fiat Lux*. Incited by Grotius' inclusion of the passage in *De veritate*, Pierre Daniel Huet refuted the validity of Longinus' judgment, which in turn elicited a response from Boileau and set off the *Querelle du Fiat Lux*.

This chapter has set forth how the influence of Longinus' treatise extended beyond the realm of rhetoric and poetics, and took centre stage in debates between biblical scholars. In the next Chapter, I will discuss how *Peri hypsous* played a significant role in yet another domain: the theory of visual arts of Franciscus Junius (1591-1677) in his *De pictura veterum* (1637).

