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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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## CONCLUSION

In this book I have shed light on the various ways and contexts in which Longinus' treatise *Peri hypsous* was read, interpreted and appropriated by Dutch scholars, from the earliest references to the treatise in scholarly works in the second half of the sixteenth century, until the publication of an edition of *Peri hypsous* in the Dutch Republic in 1694. I have examined the dissemination and reception of Longinus' treatise in the Dutch Republic by working out several case studies. In these final remarks I would like to present a brief summary of the most important observations of each of these case studies, and add several overarching reflections in which the result of my research converge.

Before *Peri hypsous* became known to Dutch scholars in the second half of the sixteenth century the early modern reception of the treatise had started in Renaissance Italy. In my first chapter I have sketched how the Par. Gr. 2036 and its early modern copies travelled through Italy, France and England, and were taken up in the library collections in which they have remained until the present day. Although manuscripts of *Peri hypsous* were circulating from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, the treatise did not leave traceable footprints in the scholarship of that time. The rediscovery of the Greek model of Catullus' *carmen* 51 (Sappho's *fragment* 31) in *Peri hypsous* in the 1550s by Marc-Antoine de Muret, illustrates that the contents of the treatise remained quite obscure until the middle of the fifteenth century, when the first editions of Longinus' treatise were printed in Basel and Venice. While the early editions of *Peri hypsous* were modest, and contained little more than the Greek text of Longinus, the seventeenth-century editions contained a wealth of material, which contextualised the treatise and its alleged author, Cassius Longinus. The sixteenth-century reception of *Peri hypsous* took off in the

circles in which the treatise had first been published, the milieu of Robortello and Manuzio in Northern Italy, the intellectual network of scholars and printers in Basel, where the *editio princeps* was published, and the tradition of Greek scholarship in Geneva, which was passed on from Franciscus Portus, via Isaac Casaubon to Gabriele de Petra.

*Peri hypsous* became known in the Dutch context via Hadrianus Junius, who probably learned about the treatise through his contacts in Basel, and Willem Canter, who travelled to Italy and visited Marc-Antoine de Muret and other Italian scholars. Through a study of Dutch book sales catalogues I have examined the presence of *Peri hypsous* in private libraries in the Dutch Republic between 1600 and 1650, which is centred mostly on the circle of academics around Leiden University. To this network, which is held together by family ties, tutorships and professional relationships, belonged scholars such as Bonaventura Vulcanius, Josephus Justus Scaliger and Janus Douza (all of which almost certainly owned copies of *Peri hypsous*), as well as scholars who demonstrably studied parts of the treatise, such as Janus Rutgersius, Daniel Heinsius, Gerardus Joannes Vossius, Hugo Grotius and Franciscus Junius the Younger. The next generation of Dutch scholars, who were involved with Longinus' treatise after 1650, included Isaac Vossius, who provided valuable collations to Jacobus Tollius for his edition of *Peri hypsous*.

Three of my case studies have shed light on adaptations of *Peri hypsous* in the first half of the seventeenth century. Chapter Two examined Daniel Heinsius' appropriation of Longinus' treatise for the defence of Homer and Hesiod, in his *Prolegomena* on Hesiod's works (1603). Reacting to scholars such as J.C. Scaliger, who valued later (Roman) poets over their Greek predecessors, Heinsius reworked parts of *Peri hypsous* into an argument about the unspoiled simplicity of the earliest Greek poets. Heinsius used Longinus' rejection of stylistic vices in *Peri hypsous* 3-5, the defence of the 'flawed genius' in *Peri hypsous* 33-36, and Longinus' dialogue on the gradual decay of literature (*Peri hypsous* 44); passages that also attracted the attention of other scholars in early modern Europe. Heinsius' *Prolegomena* are an early example of the creative interpretation of *Peri hypsous* that emphasised and amplified aspects of genius and the rejection of stylistic rules in Longinus' theory of sublimity.

In Chapter Three I have traced the famous controversy over Longinus' reference to Genesis (also known as the *Querelle du Fiat Lux*) back to early seventeenth-century discussions in rhetorical works and biblical scholarship. Longinus' inclusion of the Mosaic account of the Creation among his examples of 'greatness of thought' sparked the interest of early modern scholars and biblical critics, as it presented a pagan's judgment of the Biblical text. Hugo Grotius adduced the example in the context of his discussion of the Bible's simplicity of style and majestic subject matter in his essay *Meletius* (1611) and he adduced the passage as pagan testimony on Scripture in his famous *De veritate religionis Christianae* (first ed. 1627), which was reprinted multiple times throughout the seventeenth century. Grotius' discussion of the example was one of the factors – besides Nicolas Boileau's remarks on the quotation in the preface to his translation of *Peri hypsous* – that brought the French theologian Pierre-Daniel Huet to refute the validity of Longinus' judgment in this matter in his *Demonstratio Evangelica* (1679). In the subsequent quarrel between Boileau and Huet (who was supported by Jean Leclerc), both parties increasingly stressed the centrality of 'simplicity' in Longinus' discussion of the *Fiat Lux*. This interpretative shift, which has influenced readers of *Peri hypsous* ever since, exemplifies the complex interplay between text and context in the process of reception. While Longinus' citation of Genesis gave rise to a fierce debate in seventeenth-century criticism, the debate itself in turn left an interpretative mark on Longinus' treatise as a whole.

In my Fourth Chapter I have examined the place of *Peri hypsous* in Franciscus Junius' reconstruction of the ancient's views on the visual arts in his *De pictura veterum* (Latin edition 1637; English edition 1638; Dutch edition 1641). My analysis has uncovered three functions of *Peri hypsous* in Junius' work. Firstly, *Peri hypsous* contributes extensively to Junius' discussion of the 'psychological' aspects of artistic production: the artist's imagination (*phantasia*) and the selection of great subject matter (*magnificentia*). The second function of *Peri hypsous* is of a more technical nature. In order to make up for the scarcity of ancient theoretical treatises on the visual arts, Junius has recreated the ancient discussion artistic techniques from visual metaphors in rhetoric and literary criticism. Thirdly, Junius frequently adduces Longinus' treatise in discussions about the intricacies of literary judgment and the fine line between carefulness and excess. Several times Junius juxtaposes passages from *Peri hypsous* that respectively illustrate the limits of boldness (*Peri*

*hypsous* 3-5), and permissible licence (*Peri hypsous* 33). In the chapters on 'grace', which Junius defines as a special quality of art, *Peri hypsous* likewise serves to bolster Junius' argument on sound critical judgment, while the core of Junius' discussion of grace (which comprises elements such as 'astonishment', 'simplicity', 'ease' and 'negligence') is largely based on other sources. While these aspects of Junius' concept of grace do resonate well with some of Longinus' ideas, they do not necessarily originate in Longinus' treatise. Junius' discussion of grace rather exemplifies the kind of interpretation that early modern scholars tended to impose on *Peri hypsous*.

In each of the case studies in Chapters Two, Three and Four, Longinus' treatise is adduced to support a particular point, either to defend the earliest Greek poets, to serve as pagan testimony on Scripture, or to supplement the reconstruction of the ancient's ideas on the visual arts. In neither of these cases the interpretation of the treatise itself took centre stage. Instead, *Peri hypsous* was flexibly adjusted to the purpose it meant to serve. One of the reasons why Longinus' treatise was open to such appropriation is the fact that, unlike many other classical texts, such as for instance Horace's *Ars poetica*, *Peri hypsous* did not yet have an established interpretative tradition. Many, especially early seventeenth-century scholars, could be seen as 'first readers' of *Peri hypsous*; unimpeded, but also unsupported, by a body of scholarship on the treatise.

Even Jacobus Tollius, who read Longinus for the first time in the 1660s, engaged with *Peri hypsous* as a new discovery, and found in the treatise arguments which supported his (already established) views on ancient literature, as we have seen in Chapter Five. Rather than following the general argument of the treatise, Tollius used parts of *Peri hypsous* to bolster his comparisons between Greek and Roman literature, which were published as the *Animadversionum criticarum ad Longinum gustus* (first ed. 1677), and a set of essays published a decade later (the *Accessio*; first ed. 1687). The complete set reappeared in Tollius' edition of *Peri hypsous* in 1694. Tollius' edition is one of the results of the late seventeenth-century upswing of the textual criticism and manuscript studies of *Peri hypsous*, which were largely initiated by Isaac Vossius. Vossius appears to be the first since Pietro Vettori to have made a full collation of the Par. Gr. 2036. His studies of the text of *Peri hypsous* were taken up, although somewhat erratically, in the edition of

Jacobus Tollius (1694), and constitute a valuable source on the textual criticism of *Peri hypsous* to the present day.

Between the late sixteenth century and the end of the seventeenth century, Longinus' treatise underwent a radical interpretative shift, in which Dutch scholarship played a significant role. In my case studies I have shed light on some of the key factors that engendered this transformation. In the absence of an established scholarly tradition, *Peri hypsous* functioned as an interpretative shape-shifter, which could be used in and adjusted to a variety of contexts. The often polemic nature of these debates resulted in the amplification or redefinition of certain elements of *Peri hypsous*. We may, in conclusion, discern six main trends in the early modern appropriation of *Peri hypsous*. Firstly, *Peri hypsous* was 'harvested' as a source of textual fragments of ancient authors, among which Sappho, Euripides, Theopompus, and Hecataeus. The second and most obvious context in which *Peri hypsous* was appropriated are the theoretical treatises dealing with the whole spectrum of ideas on 'sublimity', 'the sublime style', the power of speech and poetic imagination, such as in the rhetorical and poetical works of Gerardus Joannes Vossius, but also quite extensively in the art theory of Franciscus Junius. A third, and slightly less obvious element of the early modern reception of *Peri hypsous*, which has been largely overlooked hitherto, is the popularity of Longinus' rejection of stylistic vices (*Peri hypsous* 3-5), as for instance in Heinsius' *Prolegomena* on Hesiod, *De tragoediae constitutione* and Aristarchus sacer, Junius' *De pictura veterum*, as well as works of various other scholars. These chapters of *Peri hypsous* were often interpreted as an advice to avoid artificial elaboration, and thus provided fertile ground for the redefinition of the Longinian sublime as a matter of 'simplicity' or the absence of stylistic contrivances. Closely related to this is the fourth aspect of Longinus' early modern fortunes, which is found at the intersection of biblical scholarship and literary theory: the reference to Genesis in *Peri hypsous*. From the early seventeenth century onwards Longinus' praise of Scripture was adduced in discussions of biblical stylistics, and eventually became conflated with the tradition of the 'sublime simplicity' of the Bible. The fifth aspect arises from Longinus' fondness for the great Classics, such as the works of Homer, Pindar and Sophocles. Longinus' defence of the 'flawed genius' was frequently used (for instance by Heinsius and Tollius, as well as Boileau) to subvert criticism and to praise the original genius of one of more 'ancients', and hence became

became a topic in its own right and a *locus classicus* on artistic licence. Lastly, and most importantly, the opportunistic and argumentative context in which *Peri hypsous* was often appropriated invited a focus on the elusiveness, subjectivity, or 'self-evident' nature of the Longinian sublime. A popular argument in the debates that I have analysed is the idea that it takes genius to create as well as value the 'sublime', and anyone who fails to appreciate it simply lacks the critical capacities to form the proper judgment of it. Its lack of a fixed interpretative canon as well as the pliability of its subject made *Peri hypsous* the ideal support for subjective literary judgments. In the seventeenth century *Peri hypsous* served its polemical purposes best by escaping systematic categorisation or definition, and eventually transformed into the epitome of the mysterious workings of literature, art and nature.