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Dionysius and Quintilian: Imitation and emulation in Greek and Latin literary criticism

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 DIONYSIUS AND QUINTILIAN

There was a painter named Zeuxis, and he was admired by the people of Croton. When he was painting a picture of Helen, naked, the people of Croton sent along the young girls of their town so that he could see them naked; not that they were all beautiful, but it was not probable that they were completely ugly. The features of each which were worth painting were collected together into one single image of a body, and from the compilation of many parts, Zeuxis' craftsmanship brought together one single perfect form.¹

Ζεῦξις ἦν ζωγράφος, καὶ παρὰ Κροτωνιατῶν ἐθαυμάζετο· καὶ αὐτῷ τὴν Ἑλένην γράφοντι γυμνὴν γυμνὰς ἰδεῖν τὰς παρ' αὐτοῖς ἔπεμψαν παρθένους· οὐκ ἐπειδήπερ ἦσαν ἅπασαι καλαί, ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰκὸς ἦν ὡς παντάπασιν ἦσαν αἰσχυραί· ὁ δ' ἦν ἄξιον παρ' ἐκάστη γραφῆς, ἐς μίαν ἠθροίσθη σώματος εἰκόνα, κακὰ πολλῶν μερῶν συλλογῆς ἔν τι συνέθηκεν ἢ τέχνη τέλειον [καλὸν] εἶδος.

This amusing anecdote from the life of Zeuxis is one of two narratives which are introductory to the epitome of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' treatise *On Imitation*. In this treatise, Dionysius insists on 'imitation' (μίμησις) as a perceptive and highly creative process, consisting of intensive study, the critical selection of the best features of a range of authors, and the eclectic and original composition of a new piece of art.

Imitation is at the core of Dionysius' entire oeuvre. He was a Greek rhetorician and teacher, lived and worked in Rome during the reign of Augustus, and formed part of an intriguing network of Greek and Roman intellectuals.² He devoted himself to the composition of a *History of Rome*, and of several literary-critical works discussing classical Greek

¹ Dion. Hal. *Imit.* 1.4.

² Dionysius was born probably around 60 BC. On this date, see Hidber (1996), 2; Fromentin (1998), 13. The last attestation of his life dates back to 8/7 BC, when he published the first book of his *History of Rome*, but he probably lived on for several years, finishing the other books of the *History*. On the 'circle' or 'network' or 'elite community' of Greek and Roman intellectuals, see e.g. Roberts (1900); Wisse (1995), 78-80; De Jonge (2008), 25-34 and esp. 26, n. 134; Wiater (2011), 22-29; De Jonge & Hunter (2018), 6-11.

authors.³ Among the addressees of his rhetorical works are both Greek and Roman scholars, acquaintances and friends.⁴ Whereas his *History of Rome* provides his readers with splendid models of moral conduct to be imitated in their own lives, the rhetorical-critical essays show the orators *in spe* what literary qualities they ought to study and follow in their own compositions.⁵

Dionysius' treatise *On Imitation*, devoted to a systematical discussion of imitation, may be considered a key to unlock the theories on imitation underlying many textual analyses, criticisms and judgements expressed by Dionysius in his entire corpus. Unfortunately, *On Imitation* has come down to us in battered condition. The treatise, written in Greek and addressed to the otherwise unknown Greek Demetrius, reputedly consisted of three books, but only some fragments from the first two books and a presumably faithful epitome from the second survive.⁶ Nevertheless, the remaining material, as well as several passages from Dionysius' rhetorical treatises, offer a rich mosaic of his mimetic ideas, which is worth further scrutiny.

The epitome from the second book of *On Imitation* contains a 'canon' or 'reading list' of the most important classical Greek poets, historians, philosophers and orators whose works Dionysius considered recommendable for imitation.⁷ His high regard for the literary works of what we call the Archaic and Classical Greek Periods, as well as his eager attempts to

³ Critical works of Dionysius: *On Imitation*, *On The Ancient Orators*, *On Lysias*, *On Isocrates*, *On Isaeus*, *On Demosthenes*, *On Dinarchus*, *On Thucydides*, *Two Letters to Ammaeus*, *Letter to Pompeius*, *On Composition*. More on the dating and interconnections of these works can be found in e.g. Bonner (1939); De Jonge (2008), 20-25. On Dionysius' *History of Rome*, see Gabba (1991); De Jonge & Hunter (2018).

⁴ For the addressees of Dionysius' works, see e.g. De Jonge (2008), 27-28.

⁵ On the central role of imitation within Dionysius' works, see e.g. Delcourt (2005), 43-47; De Jonge (2008), 19-20; De Jonge & Hunter (2018), 4-6. On the concept of imitation in Greek literature of the empire, see e.g. Whitmarsh (2001), 46-57.

⁶ The manuscript of this epitome dates back to the tenth century. More on this manuscript in Aujac (1992), 23, and in this dissertation in section 3.3. The three books of *On Imitation* discuss the nature of imitation (1), the writers to be imitated (2), and the ways in which imitation should be done (3). More on this in section 3.2.

⁷ In this context, 'canon' designates a prescriptive list of literature, in which the different qualities and vices of various representatives of the different genres of prose and poetry are analysed for often pedagogical purposes. Whether or not such a canon is related to the bibliographical lists compiled by Callimachus in Alexandria or the *ordines* of the librarians Aristophanes of Byzantium, Aristarchus and Apollodorus of Pergamum, remains uncertain. More on this in section 3.5.1. For (the history of) canons in antiquity, see esp. Pfeiffer (1968); 207; Kennedy (2001).

introduce these as the ‘models’ or ‘standards’ (κανόνες) for future literary production, make Dionysius a pre-eminent exponent of early imperial Roman classicism.⁸

The concepts of ‘imitation’ (*imitatio*) and classicism also lie at the heart of the *Institutio Oratoria*, composed by the Roman rhetorician Quintilian at the end of the first century AD. He compiled a canon of Greek literature, which he included in the tenth book of his *Institutio* together with an extensive canon of Latin literature. His two canons contain encouraging recommendations and compelling warnings for those who intend to imitate (and eventually also emulate) the literary virtues displayed in the masterpieces of Greek and Latin literature.

Dionysius and Quintilian join a long tradition of theorising on imitation, which presumably started with Plato.⁹ Whereas Plato conceives of μίμησις as a concept pertaining to the connection between reality and its (literary) representation, Dionysius, Quintilian and contemporary critics understand μίμησις/*imitatio* as a notion concerning the interconnections between works of literature. Still, behind their rhetorical reinterpretation of imitation, the original Platonic concept is lurking: these critics can be said to study reality through the lenses of the classical Greek authors whose works they conscientiously explore.

Whereas extensive research has been done on Dionysius’ and Quintilian’s ideas on language, literature and rhetorical imitation, their works have not yet been scrutinised in close comparison, though Quintilian certainly knew Dionysius as one of his forerunners, and may have been familiar with Dionysius’ treatise *On Imitation*.¹⁰ By focusing on the fascinating connections between the ideas on imitation expressed by Dionysius (in *On Imitation* and other relevant passages), Quintilian (in *Institutio* 10 and other relevant passages) and contemporary

⁸ For the phenomenon of classicism, see esp. Gelzer (1979); the volume ed. by Porter (2006). On classicism in Dionysius, see esp. Goudriaan (1989); Hidber (1996); Wiater (2011).

⁹ For literature on the concepts of imitation and emulation in antiquity, see e.g. Koller (1954); Bompaire (1958); Reiff (1959); Russell (1979); Kardaun (1993); Cizek (1994); McDonald (1987). For literary imitation in the Renaissance (and its connections with ancient ideas on imitation), see Jansen (2008).

¹⁰ Quintilian refers to Dionysius in 3.1.16, 9.3.89, 9.4.88. More on Quintilian’s possible dependence on Dionysius in section 4.4. Important studies on Dionysius’ works are e.g. Goudriaan (1989); De Jonge (2008); Wiater (2011); the volume ed. by De Jonge & Hunter (2018). On Dionysius’ *On Imitation* or his concept of μίμησις, see e.g. Goudriaan (1989), 218-250; Aujac (1992); Classen (1994), 326-329; Battisti (1997); Citroni (2006a); Hunter (2009), 107-127; Wiater (2011), esp. 77-92. Studies on Quintilian’s work are e.g. Cousin (1935-1936); Kennedy (1969); Seel (1977). On the tenth book of Quintilian’s *Institutio*, see e.g. Becher (1891); Peterson (1891); Tavernini (1953); Schneider (1983).

Greek and Latin authors, this dissertation sheds light on the intercultural dialogue and exchange of ideas between Greek and Roman intellectuals in early imperial Rome.¹¹

Although we may well assume that Dionysius represents a Greek, Quintilian a Roman perspective on imitation in the field of rhetoric, the twofold hypothesis of this dissertation is that these two critics 1) made use of a shared discourse of imitation, and 2) each adapted this shared discourse, and made it subservient to their own rhetorical agendas, which are determined by factors such as writing goal, readership, pedagogical aims, and developments of classicism and literary taste in the decades between their activities.

This hypothesis allows us to consider the remarkable differences and similarities between the mimetic ideas of Dionysius, Quintilian and their Greek and Latin colleagues in relation not only to the traditional parameters of ‘Greekness’ and ‘Romanness’, but also to the idea of a shared conceptual framework of imitation that could be used discretionally. Starting from the Zeuxis narrative with which the epitome of Dionysius’ *On Imitation* opens, we will explore this framework in broad outline.

1.2 ZEUXIS AND THE CONCEPTS OF IMITATION AND EMULATION

At first sight, Dionysius’ Zeuxis story (cited above) is just an enchanting and playful introduction to his canon of Greek literature.¹² As a teacher in rhetoric, Dionysius is, of course, thoroughly familiar with the principle of ‘honeying the cup of medicine’; he knows that attractiveness makes his tough but salutary lessons more effective. But however playful and attractive Dionysius’ story may be, in its deeper layers it encapsulates many aspects of his conception of rhetorical imitation. As such, the Zeuxis narrative can be considered programmatic for and illustrative of the crucial lessons to be learnt from the treatise *On Imitation*.

We have already seen that the painter Zeuxis closely observes a wide variety of models, selects those parts of them which are worth painting, and eclectically and originally brings these individual features together in a new piece of art. These successive activities run parallel to key ideas of rhetorical imitation coming to the fore in Dionysius’ works: his insistence on ‘careful study’ (μάθησις ἀκριβής) of classical writers, the acquisition of

¹¹ More on the conceptual model of an intercultural dialogue and reciprocal exchange of ideas in section 1.4.

¹² For other versions of this Zeuxis anecdote, see Cic. *Inv. Rhet.* 2.1-3; Plin. *HN* 35.64. For an analysis of different renditions of the Zeuxis story (or ‘Zeuxis myth’) and its reception in different times and cultures, see Mansfield (2007). She does not mention Dionysius’ version.

ἐπιστήμη (which comprises both knowledge of and sound judgement passed on literature), the selection of the best features of a wide range of authors, and the eclectic composition of a new text, is salient in his treatises.¹³ These aspects also play a crucial role in Quintilian, who seems to be drawing from a similar framework: ‘wide reading experience’ (*copia*), ‘sound judgement’ (*iudicium*), selection of the best features of different authors and eclecticism in composing a text are quintessential to his understanding of *imitatio*, more on which in chapter 4.3.¹⁴

However, there is another lesson to be learnt from the Zeuxis story. It teaches that imitation is not only about faithfully and eclectically following the literary masterpieces of others; it also pertains to the creative composition of works of art which *surpass* their models in beauty of style and content.¹⁵ These two aspects of the process of imitation – ‘imitation’ and ‘emulation’, i.e. μίμησις and ζῆλος – are crucial theoretical distinctions in Dionysius’ criticisms. In his works, the terms μίμησις and ζῆλος appear to be inextricably linked and, as such, constitute two complementary parts of one and the same process of imitation – each of them referring to a specific dimension of this process.

The Latin counterparts of μίμησις and ζῆλος, *imitatio* and *aemulatio*, are also presented as complementary in Quintilian. However, Quintilian conceives of the exact meaning, value and interconnection of *imitatio* and *aemulatio* differently than Dionysius does of μίμησις and ζῆλος. Chapter 2 will elaborate on this, arguing that the divergences between Dionysius’ and Quintilian’s understanding and use of mimetic terminology may well be explained by taking their different cultural backgrounds into account. We will see that Dionysius, as a Greek in Rome, considers imitation (i.e. the complex of μίμησις and ζῆλος) to

¹³ For μάθησις ἀκριβής, see Dion. Hal. *Imit.* fr. II Usener-Radermacher (1904-1929) (= U-R) = 1 Aujac = 1 Battisti, more on which in section 3.3.1. For the notion of ἐπιστήμη, see e.g. Dion. Hal. *Imit.* 5.7. The idea of eclectic imitation of various qualities of various authors can be found scattered throughout the epitome.

¹⁴ All these aspects frequently occur in Quint. 10.1-2. For *copia* and *iudicium*, see esp. Quint. 10.1.6, 8.

¹⁵ Note the mediocre beauty of the models of Zeuxis. He should rely on virgins who are neither completely beautiful nor completely ugly. I suggest that this insistence on ‘being somewhere in between’ is intentional and meaningful. The ‘girls’ (παρθένοι) whom Zeuxis uses as models, are of liminal status. Firstly, they are neither beautiful, nor ugly. Secondly, as virgins they are on the threshold of childhood and adulthood. Thirdly, they come from Croton, a Greek colony in the southern part of Italy, and as such a liminal place, both culturally and geographically. Like the virgins, exemplary texts do not need to be completely beautiful; the selective imitation and emulation of these texts may result in a perfectly beautiful composition. More on the importance of the setting of Croton in the Zeuxis story in Cic. *Inv. Rhet.* 2.1-3 in Mansfield (2007), 19-38; 158-159. More on the notion of ‘emulation’ or ‘competition’ in ancient society in Damon & Pieper (2018).

be the essential means to re-express and revive Greek masterpieces in an original way, whereas the Roman teacher Quintilian makes imitation (i.e. the complex of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*) of Greek literature serve his agenda to bring Latin literature on a par with Greek.¹⁶

In this dissertation, I will use the term ‘imitation’ both in a broad sense (referring to imitation and emulation together) and, in terminological discussions, in a narrow sense (referring to μίμησις/*imitatio*, as opposed to ζῆλος/*aemulatio*).

1.3 CROSSING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN GREEKS AND ROMANS.

CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF IMITATION

Although Dionysius and Quintilian share many key ideas of imitation, they define the aspects of imitation (i.e. imitation and emulation) in different ways. Likewise, they differ in their conceptualisation of imitation. The discrepancies between them are mainly based on the contrast between a high and low language register.

On the one hand, Dionysius, using imagery that is Platonically inspired, frames imitation in terms of artistic creation, wonder, mental movement, internalisation of beauty in one’s soul, and mental pregnancy. His language is indicative of an aesthetic more than a practical approach of imitation, as chapters 2 and 3 will demonstrate. On the other hand, Quintilian’s language of imitation is rather prosaic and abounds in metaphors of competition and an ongoing trial of strength between Greece and Rome. His judgements passed on Greek and Latin literature seem to be based on the criterion of ‘rhetorical usefulness’ more than on that of ‘beauty’, as chapters 2 and 4 will show.

This section briefly sets out how Platonic imagery is adaptively used in Dionysius’ programmatic stories introducing the treatise *On Imitation*, and establishes that the conceptualisation of imitation as an exalted activity is shared by both Greeks and Romans.¹⁷ Likewise, the type of conceptualisation of imitation used by Quintilian, which is more prosaic

¹⁶ In chapter 5, I will discuss terminology and theories of imitation in other Greek and Latin authors.

¹⁷ Hunter (2009) and Wiater (2011), esp. 77 ff. pay due attention to these narratives. Hunter focuses on the predominant ‘language of pregnancy and birth’, which calls for a Platonic reading of Dionysius’ two anecdotes. Wiater stresses the numerous verbs and nouns related to ‘seeing’ and ‘looking’, which indicate that to understand classical texts, a close observation – both physically and mentally – is indispensable. He also discusses the important concept of ‘technical skill’ or ‘art’ (τέχνη), which is of crucial importance in both the mimetic activity of studying and composing. Jansen (2008), 361-366 discusses how different renditions of the Zeuxis story shed light on the concept of emulation.

and concerned with practical usefulness, seems to cross the boundaries between Greek and Roman mimetic theories.

The moral which is added to the Zeuxis story is highly illustrative of Dionysius' peculiar imagery of imitation as a process of artistic creation and spiritual activity. Dionysius concludes the Zeuxis narrative with the following urgent message for his readers:

Thus you too, as in a theatre, have the possibility to examine the forms of beautiful bodies and to pick what is best from their souls, and, by bringing together the contribution of your wide learning, not to mould an image that will fade with time, but an immortal, beautiful piece of art.¹⁸

Τοιγαροῦν πάρεστι καὶ σοὶ καθάπερ ἐν θεάτρῳ καλῶν σωμάτων ιδέας ἐξιστορεῖν καὶ τῆς ἐκείνων ψυχῆς ἀπανθίζεσθαι τὸ κρεῖττον, καὶ τὸν τῆς πολυμαθείας ἔρανον συλλέγοντι οὐκ ἐξίτηλον χρόνῳ γενησομένην εἰκόνα τυποῦν ἀλλ' ἀθάνατον τέχνης κάλλος.

We can observe that for Dionysius, rhetorical imitation has both a technical-creative (cf. τυπεῖν/τέχνη) and spiritual dimension (cf. ψυχή). These two dimensions are also salient in a remaining fragment from *On Imitation*. It contains definitions of 'imitation' (μίμησις) and 'emulation' (ζῆλος), the former of which is designated as 'an activity that 'moulds' (ἐκμάττεσθαι) the model in accordance with the rules of art', the latter as 'an activity of the soul, of being moved towards wonder at what seems to be beautiful'.¹⁹ Here, the soul of the imitator, not of the model, is at stake; nevertheless, the recurring language of mental activity and beauty is striking.

The last words of the Zeuxis narrative, 'one single perfect form' (ἐν τέλειον [καλὸν] εἶδος), as well as the final words of the moral, 'immortal, beautiful piece of art' (ἀθάνατον τέχνης κάλλος), are strongly reminiscent of Plato's theory of perfect and immortal forms, on which all objects and concepts of our evanescent world depend – as imitations on their models.²⁰ As Richard Hunter has observed, Zeuxis' striving for a masterpiece that can be

¹⁸ Dion. Hal. *Imit.* 1.5.

¹⁹ Dion. Hal. *Imit.* fr. III U-R = 2 Aujac = 2 Battisti: μίμησις ἐστὶν ἐνέργεια διὰ τῶν θεωρημάτων ἐκματτομένη τὸ παράδειγμα. Ζῆλος δὲ ἐστὶν ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς πρὸς θαῦμα τοῦ δοκοῦντος εἶναι καλοῦ κινουμένη. For a discussion of this fragment, see sections 2.2.1 and 3.3.1.

²⁰ Also the marked contrasts between 1) beauty and ugliness (cf. καλαί [...] αἰσχροί) and 2) body and soul (cf. καλῶν σωμάτων ιδέας [...] τῆς ἐκείνων ψυχῆς) render the narrative and moral Platonic in colouring.

called a τέλειον [καλὸν] εἶδος reminds us in particular of Plato's *Republic*, in which Socrates is looking for true justice and for a man who is 'perfectly just' (τελέως δίκαιον).²¹ Socrates compares this intellectual quest to a painter depicting a 'model' (παράδειγμα) of a man who is utterly beautiful but whose existence in reality cannot be proven.²²

Dionysius' words do not only allude to, but also contort Plato's theory of forms. Whereas Plato conceives of εἶδος as a perfect, immortal and transcendent 'idea' of which all earthly matters (and certainly paintings, which are regarded as 'images of images') are mere perishing reflections, Dionysius' notion of εἶδος refers to a perfect, beautiful and immortal piece of art in which several deficient natural manifestations (i.e. the maidens) are united and sublimated.²³ Thus, in overtly Platonic idiom, Dionysius here claims the primacy of art over nature, which runs counter to Platonic thought. In doing so, he practices the imitation theory he preaches: by originally adapting Platonic language to his own rhetorical ideas and purposes, he is able to perpetuate and breathe new life into the grand literature of the classical Greek past.²⁴

The appealing narrative on the ugly farmer, which precedes the Zeuxis story in the epitome of Dionysius' *On Imitation*, enfolds an imagery of spiritual pregnancy and giving birth to beauty that is even more indebted to Plato. The story and its closing moral are as follows:

²¹ Hunter (2009), 114. U-R (1904-1929) and Aujac (1992) have τέλειον [καλὸν] εἶδος, following Kiessling in deleting καλὸν and reading εἶδος. Battisti (1997) has τέλειον καλόν. Ἴδού, [...].

²² Pl. *Resp.* 5.472b-d.

²³ Plato unfolds his theory of forms esp. in his *Phaedo* and *Republic*. For his observations concerning imitation in painting, see *Resp.* 10.598a-d. For his discussion of the objects of imitation as a third remove from truth, see *Resp.* 10.602c1-3.

²⁴ Dionysius probably also makes a nod to Herodotus' *Histories* in the moral attached to the narrative on Zeuxis. For a discussion of his allusions to Herodotus, see also Hunter (2009), 121-122. His first allusion to Herodotus' *Histories* is the verb 'to inquire' (ἐξιστορεῖν). Herodotus uses it in 7.195.7 to describe the interrogations of two prisoners of war by the Greeks. It seems odd that in Dionysius the verb ἐξιστορεῖν, which implies an intellectual activity, has καλῶν σωμάτων ιδέας as its object. As Hunter (2009), 121 points out, this oddity may 'reflect the shift between the Zeuxis anecdote and its moral from a purely visual and aesthetic activity to an intellectual ιστορίη'. The second allusion to Herodotus in the moral attached to the narrative on Zeuxis is the phrase οὐκ ἐξίτηλον χρόνω, which overtly refers to the proem of Herodotus' *Histories*, in which the historian states that he wrote his work 'to prevent the deeds of humanity from fading with time' (ὡς μήτε τὰ γινόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνω ἐξίτηλα γένηται).

It is said that fear came upon an ugly-faced farmer that he would become the father of children like himself. This fear, however, taught him the art of generating beautiful children. After having produced beautiful images, he made his wife look at them regularly. Next, he made love with her and eventually obtained the beauty of the images <reflected in his own children>. In this way, in literature also, likeness is born through imitation, whenever someone emulates what seems to be better in each of the ancients and, as it were, constructs one stream out of many and canalises this into his soul.²⁵

Ἄνδρὶ, φασί, γεωργῶ τὴν ὄψιν αἰσχροῦ παρέστη δέος μὴ τέκνων ὁμοίων γένηται πατήρ. Ὁ φόβος δὲ αὐτὸν οὗτος εὐπαιδίας ἐδίδαξε τέχνην. Καὶ εἰκόνας πλάσας εὐπρεπεῖς, εἰς αὐτὰς βλέπειν εἴθισε τὴν γυναῖκα· καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα συγγενόμενος αὐτῇ τὸ κάλλος εὐτύχησε τῶν εἰκόνων. Οὕτω καὶ λόγων μιμήσει ὁμοιότης τίκτεται, ἐπὶ ζηλώσει τις τὸ παρ' ἐκάστῳ τῶν παλαιῶν βέλτιον εἶναι δοκοῦν, καὶ καθάπερ ἐκ πολλῶν ναμάτων ἔν τι συγκομίσας ῥεῦμα τοῦτ' εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν μετοχετεύσει.

Transposed to the field of rhetoric, this story teaches that close observation of different specimens of beautiful literature is essential for producing beautiful texts.²⁶ Dionysius and his students are personified by both the farmer and his wife at the same time: they long for beauty out of fear for producing something ugly (like the farmer), and they give birth to beauty after intensive and repetitive study (like the farmer's wife).²⁷ The tenor of this story, in which art is the model for nature, can be considered an inversion of that of the Zeuxis narrative, in which nature is the model for art.²⁸

Notwithstanding this proclamation of the prevalence of art over nature, the Platonic inheritance of the story on the ugly farmer (again recognised by Richard Hunter) is

²⁵ Dion. Hal. *Imit.* 1.2-3.

²⁶ On the aspect of close observation in this story, see esp. Wiater (2011), 83. The closing moral highlights the importance of unification of different models as well as the task of the soul, and can be regarded as a more profound reframing of the tenor of the story.

²⁷ Hunter (2009), 113 rightly argues that by introducing the farmer's wife, Dionysius "normalises" the extraordinary biology of the *Symposium* in which the male gives birth [...].

²⁸ The idea of nature imitating art also seems to be diametrically opposed to Dionysius' statement that 'the greatest achievement of art is to imitate nature' (τὸ μιμήσασθαι τὴν φύσιν αὐτῆς [i.e. τῆς τέχνης, M.S.] μέγιστον ἔργον ἦν) (*Is.* 16.1).

remarkable.²⁹ In Plato's *Symposium*, the priestess Diotima teaches Socrates that while some people are physically pregnant and try to gain immortality through children, others, after having spent sufficient time in proximity of beauty, are mentally pregnant and long for immortality through intellectual offspring.³⁰ The Platonic allusions continue in the moral, in which Dionysius applies the metaphor of the stream to conceptualise the mimetic relationship between authors – thus suggesting a smooth continuity between the literature of the past and the present.³¹

The framing (whether or not in Platonic language) of imitation as an inspired activity catalysed by beauty is certainly not confined to Dionysius – or to Greeks – alone.³² This particular type of discourse crosses the boundaries that have traditionally been supposed to exist between Greek and Roman critics. As chapter 5 will show, Dionysius, Aelius Theon, Longinus and Pliny all, in rather flowery language, emphasise the loftiness of imitation, and adopt a remarkably aesthetic (and sometimes archaizing) approach towards works of literature which they consider to be useful for rhetorical practice.³³ On the other hand, we can observe coherences between the framing of imitation in Tacitus, Dio Chrysostom and Quintilian, who tend to take a more modern, prosaic and opportunistic stance towards Greek literature, deeming its usefulness and efficiency in Roman rhetorical practice of even greater importance than its enchanting beauty. These latter authors may well reflect a later stage in or different form of Roman classicism.³⁴

It is important to emphasise that the above 'arrangement' of authors does not claim to be normative or stringent, nor intends to substitute classifications based on the parameters of

²⁹ Hunter (2009), esp. 110-113.

³⁰ Pl. *Symp.* 208e-209e. Plato's examples of people who are mentally pregnant are Homer, Hesiod, other great poets of the past, Lycurgus and Solon (*Symp.* 209d).

³¹ For the language of the stream and of 'canalising' in this passage, see further Hunter (2009), esp. 113. For the metaphor of the stream in Quintilian's Greek reading list, see section 4.9.2. For a profound discussion of the Platonic stream of language and ideas influencing ancient literature, see Hunter (2012). For the image of the stream in Plato, see e.g. *Symp.* 206d4-7 (people with spiritual potency are said to give rise to a flow (cf. διαχεῖται) when they approach the beautiful, whereas ugliness results in desiccation); *Ion* 534a-b (poets are said to draw their inspiration from sources flowing with honey, like the bees).

³² For a discussion of recurring metaphors in Greek and Latin sources on imitation, see chapter 5, and esp. the overview in section 5.8.

³³ Seneca is close to many of these authors in his insistence on the importance of the soul during the process of imitation.

³⁴ For the idea of different forms of classicism, see Porter (2006), 50, who argues that 'we are evidently having to do not with a single form of classicism but with a variety of *classicisms* in the plural [...]'.

‘Greekness’ and ‘Romanness’. On the contrary, it demonstrates the possibility to bring Greeks and Romans together in a way that accounts for the conceptual crosslinks between them regarding two quintessential mimetic criteria: literary beauty and rhetorical-practical usefulness. Although these conceptual crosslinks allow for an arrangement of two ‘groups’, Dionysius, Aelius Theon, Seneca, Longinus, Pliny, Tacitus, Dio Chrysostom and Quintilian all tap into a common repertoire of mimetic ideas and metaphors, from which they could select those elements that suited their own agendas and satisfied their different audiences most adequately. By assuming a shared arsenal of ideas and metaphors supplying the essential material for constructing different personal agendas, we are able to explain the numerous similarities and differences between notions of imitation in the first century AD.

1.4 INTERACTION BETWEEN GREECE AND ROME.

TERMS AND THEORIES

How does the idea of a discourse of imitation shared by Greeks and Romans alike relate to the scholarly debate on Greek and Roman identity in imperial Rome? In order to answer this question, let us briefly turn to different theories concerning the contacts between Greeks and Romans.

In the past, Roman responses to Greek culture have been scrutinised, but the interaction between Greeks and Romans who lived and worked together in Rome remained fairly underexposed.³⁵ The view has been held that the articulation of cultural expressions by Greeks and Romans should be estimated in terms of ‘acculturation’, a general concept overarching various perspectives on the interplay between two or more cultures.³⁶ The terminology of acculturation also includes notions like ‘fusion’, ‘hybridity’, ‘creolisation’ and ‘métissage’.³⁷ Labels like these suppose a new, uniform culture blended from two or more different cultures, with the obsolescence of all peculiarities of the different ethnic categories

³⁵ An important study on Roman approaches to Greek literature is Hutchinson (2013). Feeney (2016) analyses how the Romans took over Greek literary genres, made these genres their own, and developed a literature which presented itself as a continuation of Greek literature. Studies on Roman responses to Greek culture and learning are e.g. Woolf (1994); Stroup (2007).

³⁶ For the term ‘acculturation’, see Veyne (1979), 4.

³⁷ For the terms ‘fusion’ and ‘hybridity’, see Newsome (2011), 68. A useful description of ‘creolisation’ - a term borrowed from linguistics - is given by Wallace-Hadrill (2008), esp. 13-14, who also discusses the notion of ‘métissage’ (*ibid.*, 12-13).

at stake. However, this picture turns out to be hardly applicable to the situation in Augustan Rome, since it does not account for the numerous differences between Greeks and Romans in cultural and intellectual life.

Fortunately, archaeologists and historians have recently developed a different model for analysing the interaction between Greek and Roman culture. Especially the important work *Rome's Cultural Revolution* by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill gave impetus to this conceptual turn.³⁸ He established that Augustan culture is highly dynamic and is shaped through the reciprocal exchange of ideas between Greeks and Romans who maintained their distinctive identities: 'the cultures do not fuse, but enter into a vigorous and continuous process of dialogue with one another'.³⁹ This model is satisfying in that it can explain the close similarities between various Greek and Roman cultural expressions, while doing justice to the peculiar identities of Greeks and Romans.

The present dissertation builds on this notion of two different, coexisting cultures involved in a dialectical exchange of ideas, transposing it to the world of Greek and Latin mimetic theory in Rome. Dionysius of Halicarnassus was thoroughly Roman, but also thoroughly Greek. On the one hand, his activities were inextricably embedded in rhetorical education and practice in Augustan Rome, and his engagements with Roman intellectuals and students probably gave him the opportunity not only to understand the values of Augustan literary culture in depth, but also to spread his ideas on the imitation of the great literary masters of classical Greece in such a way that it suited Roman literary practice.

On the other hand, Dionysius continued to write in Greek about the stylistic magnificence of Homer and Pindar, the clarity of Alcaeus, the tension of Antimachus, the grace of Lysias, and the solemnity of Lycurgus. What would the exact aims of his reflections on these Greek authors from centuries ago have been? Obviously, his young students in rhetoric could learn much from the compositional strategies and stylistic virtues displayed by these Greek literary heroes. However, this does not sufficiently explain the often aesthetic,

³⁸ Wallace-Hadrill (2008). See Gosden (2004) for the idea that cultural elements in colonialist circumstances can exist alongside each other.

³⁹ Wallace-Hadrill (2008), 23. Wallace-Hadrill's idea of coexisting cultural elements is sustained by the concepts of 'bilingualism' and 'code-switching', which imply that Greeks and Romans could easily switch from the Greek to the Latin language and from Greek to Latin dress and behaviour. For the idea of Augustan culture as a time of transition and experimentation which had many contributors and was far from monolithic, see the important work of Galinski (1996).

sometimes archaizing literary choices Dionysius makes in order to prepare his students for Roman rhetorical practice.

Why, then, do Dionysius' choices seem to be dictated by the intrinsic beauty of Greek literature even more than by the principle of practical usefulness? We should consider the suggestion that he may well have been concerned with a *revival* of the splendid literature of classical Greece, in order to strengthen the identity of Greeks in Rome, and to help Rome's restoration of the Attic Muse come to full fruition both in Greek and Latin literature.⁴⁰ By contrast, Quintilian, who seems to enter into a dialogue with mimetic theories and ideas that were also known to Dionysius, admires Greek literature, but merely considers it a rich reservoir to provide the Romans with the essential means to establish literary domination over Greece. Thus, while drawing from and contributing to a shared discourse, Dionysius and Quintilian seem not to compromise their own cultural identities. The present dissertation explores this idea.

1.5 STRUCTURE, CONTENT AND METHODS

The twofold, central question of this dissertation is how the theories of imitation and emulation expressed by Dionysius, Quintilian and other Greek and Latin critics are interconnected, and how the similarities and divergences between their theories can be explained. The following chapters of this dissertation will all contribute to an answer to this question. In this section, I will briefly set out the structure of this book, the content of the different chapters, and the research methods applied.

Chapter 2 ('Dionysius and Quintilian on Imitation and Emulation') is based on linguistic and contextual analysis. This chapter will provide an answer to the question how Dionysius interconnects and applies the notions of *μίμησις* and *ζῆλος* throughout his works, and how Quintilian interconnects and applies the notions of *imitatio* and *aemulatio* throughout his *Institutio*. It argues that whereas the similarities between their use and interpretation of mimetic terminology point to a similar framework of imitation, the remarkable differences derive from their cultural stance towards the literary legacy of classical Greece.

A side note should be made here. The mimetic terminology in Dionysius and Quintilian (chapter 2) is discussed separately from the mimetic theory in Dionysius' *On Imitation* (chapter 3) and Quintilian's *Institutio* 10 (chapter 4). There are two important and

⁴⁰ For the idea of Augustan Rome as the revival of classical Athens, see esp. Hidber (1996), 75-81; Wiater (2011), 60-119. For Dionysius' reference to the restoration of the Attic Muse in Rome, see *Orat. Vett.* 2.1.

compelling reasons for this distinction between terminology and theory. In the first place, mimetic terminology in Dionysius and Quintilian is of such comprehensiveness that it covers an entire chapter, and of such elementary interest that it needs to be addressed at the beginning of this dissertation. Secondly, a separate, comparative discussion of Dionysius' and Quintilian's mimetic terminology allows us to see the similarities and contrasts between their definitions of μίμησις and ζῆλος and *imitatio* and *aemulatio* more clearly.⁴¹

In chapter 3 ('Dionysius' *On Imitation* and his Reading List of Greek Literature'), the research methods applied comprise close reading and qualitative and quantitative analysis. This chapter studies the themes and criteria for successful imitation that can be distilled and reconstructed from the fragments of *On Imitation*, an extensive quote from it in Dionysius' *Letter to Pompeius*, and the epitome of the second book of *On Imitation*. By providing a thorough analysis of this intriguing textual evidence, which has not been scrutinised on this scale before, this chapter explains the aesthetic (and sometimes archaizing) gist of Dionysius' mimetic ideas in relation to his proclamation of offering practical advice. It establishes that Dionysius' conspicuous insistence on virtues pertaining to magnificence and beauty is counterbalanced by his cogent plea for more practical literary qualities related to e.g. clarity.

Chapter 4 ('From Dionysius to Quintilian. Quintilian's Reading Lists of Greek and Latin Literature') is based on close reading and qualitative, quantitative and comparative analysis. This chapter describes the structure, aims, choices and evaluations of authors, selection criteria and use of literary virtues in Quintilian's canons of Greek and Latin literature in comparison with Dionysius' reading list. It argues that although Quintilian has much in common with Dionysius, his choices of and judgements passed on authors are also clear reflections of a different rhetorical agenda, which essentially serves his aspiration to make the Romans worthy heirs and skilled adaptors of the sublime literary treasures of classical Greece.

In chapter 5 ('Greek and Roman Theories on Imitation in the First Century AD'), the research methods of close reading and comparative case study analysis are applied. This chapter sets out to examine the terminology and theories of imitation in Aelius Theon's

⁴¹ Inherent to the choice for this structure is that Dion. Hal. *Imit.* fr. III U-R = 2 Aujac = 2 Battisti, which contains two intriguing definitions of μίμησις and ζῆλος, is discussed both in chapters 2 and (much more briefly) 3, but from a different angle. In chapter 2, fr. III U-R is examined from a terminological point of view. Chapter 3 focuses on the fragment's thematic connections with the other remnants of *On Imitation*. This difference in approach will also be noticed at the beginning of section 2.2.1.

Progymnasmata, Seneca's *Letter to Lucilius* 84, Longinus' *On the Sublime*, various letters of Pliny, Tacitus' *Dialogue on Oratory*, and Dio Chrysostom's *Oration* 18, and as such offers a variegated background for the discussions of the terminology and theories of imitation in Dionysius and Quintilian. This chapter establishes that there are several crosslinks between all of these Greek and Roman critics, not only on the level of mimetic terminology and imagery, but also in the ways in which they address the tension between literary beauty and practical usefulness in their reflections on (rhetorical) imitation. These crosslinks point to a shared, Graeco-Roman discourse.

