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

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CHAPTER 5

GREEK AND ROMAN THEORIES ON IMITATION IN THE FIRST CENTURY AD

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the time between Dionysius and Quintilian, many Greek and Roman critics in Rome either casually or explicitly dealt with issues of imitation. To be sure, imitation had been a key concept in Greek and Latin literature for a long time. No self-respecting Greek or Roman author ever escaped from taking a stance towards the illustrious Greek literary past by modelling his own new compositions after the exemplary works of others.[1] Imitation had always helped to construct people's identities in the present against the background of the past and, above that, to *anchor* 'the new' into 'the old'.[2] As such, imitation formed a quintessential topic in Greek and Latin literary theory.

In imperial Rome, the concept of imitation of classical models as a means to define one's role in the present had yet another dimension. Rome's intellectual elite consisted of both Greeks and Romans who lived and worked together under Roman rule, and were often educated in the same schools. We have already seen that among Dionysius' addressees were both Greeks and Romans, who formed part of an intriguing network of intellectuals; also Quintilian must have been deeply involved in the Greek and Roman circles of theorists and authors of his own time.[3] Greeks and Romans in Rome were deeply interested in the same classical Greek literary heritage, which inspired them to compose new texts both in Greek and Latin, and which helped them to construct and express their artistic and cultural identities.

As the previous chapters on Dionysius and Quintilian have shown, within this cultural pluriformity of Rome, theories on imitation do not only shed light on the value of classical Greek models for the construction of identity of Greeks and Romans separately, but also on the intercultural dialogue and exchange of ideas between them, which was catalysed by the

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[1] Cf. Russell (1979), 16 (cf. also 12): 'The imitation must be tacitly acknowledged, on the understanding that the informed reader will recognize and approve the borrowing. The borrowing must be 'made one's own', by individual treatment and assimilation to its new place and purpose'.

[2] For the concept of 'anchoring' what is new in what is old, see Sluiter (2017).

[3] For Dionysius' network of Greek and Roman intellectuals, see section 1.1, n. 2. For Dionysius' addressees, see sections 3.1; 3.3.4; 3.4. For Quintilian's Greek and Roman acquaintances, see e.g. section 4.6.

contemplation of the same models.[4] By examining a number of Greek and Latin texts from the first century AD, this chapter will put in perspective the terminology and theories of imitation in Dionysius and Quintilian, and show how both critics relate to a wider network of Greek and Roman authors.

In recent years, many scholars have paid due attention to the concept of imitation in the Augustan Period as well as in the classicising movement of the Second Sophistic (50-250 AD). Important research on the concept of imitation in the Augustan Period has, for instance, been done by Richard Hunter and Nicolas Wiater, who both published on Dionysius' treatise *On Imitation*.[5] In section 2.1, I referred to a monograph by Whitmarsh, who examines two concepts, μίμησις and παιδεία, which are fundamental for the construction of Greek identity in both Greek and Roman authors, and especially in those belonging to the Second Sophistic.[6] For a better understanding of the connections between Augustan classicism and classicising tendencies in the first century AD, it is crucial to investigate Dionysius' and Quintilian's ideas on imitation in conjunction with notions on imitation expressed by Greeks and Romans who lived in the decades between them.

Six Greek and Roman authors, all of whose works are characterised by a strong classicising approach, are singled out per section: Aelius Theon (*Progymnasmata*, section 5.2), Seneca (*Letter to Lucilius* 84, section 5.3), Longinus (*On the Sublime*, section 5.4), Pliny the Younger (various letters, section 5.5), Tacitus (*Dialogue on Oratory*, section 5.6) and Dio Chrysostom (*Oration* 18, traditionally entitled *On Training for Public Speaking*, section 5.7). Since the precise dates of the publications of most of these authors are uncertain, the order of their appearance in this chapter is determined by coherence in thought and discourse – which is also my focus – rather than chronology.[7] In this discussion, Pliny holds a special, intermediate place. On the one hand, he shows himself indebted to the Platonic language of

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[4] For the role played by (the imitation of former) literature in the construction of Greek identity in the Second Sophistic Period in Rome, see Whitmarsh (2001). Wallace-Hadrill (2008) (see esp. 237-239) adopts a very broad cultural perspective on imitation instead of a purely literary one, discussing many different forms of interaction between Greeks and Romans which redefined their cultural identities.

[5] Hunter (2009); Wiater (2011).

[6] Whitmarsh (2001).

[7] In fact, only the letters of Pliny can be dated with certainty, namely between 96 and 109 AD. On the other authors, see the specific sections devoted to them.

mental pregnancy and inspiration used by Dionysius and Longinus; on the other hand, he is also closely connected with the ideas of his friend Tacitus and his teacher Quintilian.[8]

The broad similarities between the approaches to imitation in the authors mentioned above are obvious. A remarkable correspondence between their observations on imitation concerns the designation of various stages within the imitative process, i.e. 1) the intensive and repeated study of a wide variety of literary models, 2) the acquisition of a sharp judgement, 3) the selection of what is best in the models chosen, and 4) the eclectic and original composition of a new work of literature.[9] Furthermore, they all mention and (more or less profoundly) discuss classical Greek models whom they consider to be of paramount use for people involved with rhetoric. However, whereas Dionysius, Dio and Quintilian present a reading list which is formally recognizable or explicitly presented as a 'canon', the evaluative remarks on Greek authors made by Aelius Theon, Seneca, Longinus, Pliny, and Tacitus can be found in (extensive) passages or more or less scattered throughout their works.

In the past, some scholars have paid attention to the crosslinks between the rhetorical works of Dionysius and Aelius Theon, Dionysius and Longinus, Longinus and Pliny, Pliny and Tacitus, Pliny and Quintilian and Tacitus and Quintilian, but they have not (specifically or exclusively) focused on their notions of imitation.[10]

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[8] Plin. *Ep*. 7.20, 8.7, 9.23 (references to Tacitus); Plin. *Ep*. 2.14.9, 6.6.3 (references to Quintilian).

[9] Cf. Russell (1979), 5, who distinguishes two central points in ancient theories of imitation: 'One is that the true object of imitation is not a single author, but the good qualities abstracted from many. […] The second point, related to the first, is that the imitator must always penetrate below the superficial, verbal features of his exemplar to its spirit and significance'. The latter idea partly corresponds to the second stage I distinguish (the acquisition of a sharp judgement), but also to the first stage (intensive and repeated study). Of course, Russell is right in arguing that many ancient critics insisted on the idea that 'an imitator must always penetrate below the superficial, verbal features of his exemplar', but we should not forget that critics like Dionysius and Quintilian tried to grasp the spirit and significance of texts precisely by studying verbal features: choice of words, composition and figures of speech.

[10] Patillon (1997) (esp. xcviii-c) touches upon the resemblances between Dionysius, Aelius Theon and Quintilian. For the relation between Dionysius and Longinus, see e.g. Halliwell (2002) (esp. 292-296 and 310-312); De Jonge (2012). For Longinus and Pliny (and Seneca), see e.g. Armisen-Marchetti (1990). For Pliny and Tacitus, see e.g. Griffin (1999); Marchesi (2008), 97-143; Johnson (2010), 63-73; Whitton (2012) and bibliographies. For Quintilian and Pliny, see e.g. Whitton (forthc.) and bibliography. For Tacitus and Quintilian, see e.g. Brink (1989). For Aelius Theon and Quintilian, see e.g. Lana (1951); Henderson (1991), who discusses the relationship between Quintilian and progymnasmatic writers, among whom Aelius Theon.

Other scholars have pointed to the connections between the literary canons of Dionysius, Dio (presented in his *Oration* 18) and Quintilian.[11] Usener claimed that Quintilian did not borrow the judgements on Greek poets and authors from Dionysius.[12] Cohoon and Lemarchand argued that Dio's list is built upon the same ideas as expressed in the accounts of Dionysius and Quintilian.[13] More recently, Billault expressed the opinion that there are no substantial differences between the reading lists in Dio, Dionysius and Quintilian, nuancing this statement by observing that Dio's list is very brief and insists on the 'usefulness' of literature for its addressee, a Greek statesman.[14] In his study on canons of style in the Antonine age, Rutherford observed that the lists of Dionysius, Dio and Quintilian distinguish the same categories of poetry, history, oratory and philosophy, and that poetry indisputably comes first, followed by the prose categories in varying order.[15] Recently, De Jonge rightly argued that Dio's list is in fact fundamentally different from that of Dionysius, and that Quintilian on important issues sides with Dio.[16]

The present chapter offers an examination of the mimetic ideas of Aelius Theon, Seneca, Longinus, Pliny, Tacitus, and Dio altogether. The first aim of this chapter is to argue that Greeks and Romans drew from and contributed to a shared discourse of imitation.[17] Correspondences in the use of terminology and metaphors of imitation in both Greek and Latin authors point to this shared discourse, which can probably also be traced back to their training in the rhetorical schools in Rome.[18] As for mimetic terminology, we will observe that there is generally a loose formal distinction between μίμησις/ζῆλος and *imitatio/aemulatio*, and that often one of these terms seems to purport the complex of imitation and emulation

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[11] I mentioned their discussions before in section 4.2.

[12] Usener (1889), 132: *iudicia de poetis scriptoribusque Graecis non a Dionysio Quintilianus mutuatus est*.

[13] Lemarchand (1926), 10: 'comme on le voit, il n'y a à peu rien dans la lettre XVIII qui ne se retrouve chez Denys d'Halicarnasse et Quintilien. Ce sont les recettes courantes, les procédés traditionnels que contenaient tous les manuels d'art oratoire'. Cohoon (1939), 209: 'Dio Chrysostom, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Quintilian, gave select lists of authors for students to read. The fact that there are no great divergences in these lists gives the impression that there was general agreement in the ancient schools as to which were the best authors for students'.

[14] Billault (2004), 505.

[15] Rutherford (1998), 43.

[16] See De Jonge in J. König & N. Wiater (forthc.). De Jonge explains the divergences between Dionysius and Dio by pointing to their different addressees, purposes, literary preferences and text genres.

[17] Cf. Russell (1979), 1, who speaks of a 'general Greco-Roman acceptance of imitation'.

[18] For the role of imitation and emulation in ancient rhetorical education, see e.g. Marrou (1975); Morgan (1998); Cribiore (2001).

together. As for metaphors of imitation, we will e.g. see that in both Greek and Latin texts 1) images of the movement of the soul designate the inspiration by and internalisation of literary models, 2) images of food digestion mirror the importance of internalizing and harmonizing a great variety of (aspects of) different literary models, and 3) images related to weather conditions represent the striking effects of successful imitation upon an audience.

The second aim of this chapter, which is in close alignment with the first, is to show that each of the Greek and Roman authors to be discussed adapts the common discourse of imitation to his own, individual agenda, which is determined by factors such as text genre and text goal, the addressee, personal literary taste, specific attittudes towards prose and poetry and present and past, and different interpretations and valuations of the concepts of literary beauty on the one hand and rhetorical-practical usefulness on the other. All of these factors, which can adequately explain the differences between these authors, will (if relevant) be taken into account in the different sections of this chapter.

By focusing not only on the shared framework and discourse of the selected authors, but also on their personal agendas, this chapter casts light on the similarities and differences between notions of imitation in the first century AD. Building on the few studies concerning crosslinks between specific Greek and Latin authors, this chapter confirms the fact that the traditional distinction between Greeks and Romans fails to account for the remarkable correspondences in thought between them. On the basis of these correspondences, the authors discussed can also be arranged on the basis of parameters other than 'Greekness' and 'Romanness'.

On the one hand, we can group the like-minded critics Dionysius, Aelius Theon, Longinus and Pliny together, who all, in rather lofty language, adopt a remarkably aesthetic (and sometimes archaizing) approach of classical Greek literature for rhetorical-practical purposes. Seneca, who does not explictly address his mimetic approach and preferences in his *Letter to Lucilius* 84, is close to many of these authors (i.e. Dionysius, Aelius Theon and Longinus) in his conceptualisation of imitation as an activity of the soul. On the other hand, we can discern coherences between the views of Tacitus, Dio Chrysostom and Quintilian, who seem to insist on the usefulness of the corpus of Greek literature more than on its beauty – an approach which may well reflect a later stage in Roman Classicism.

5.2 AELIUS THEON'S *PROGYMNASMATA*

Aelius Theon's *Progymnasmata* is a technical Greek text concerning preliminary exercises to Greek rhetoric.[19] The attribution of the *Progymnasmata* to Aelius Theon is based upon the *Suda*, which has an entry by Hesychius for Aelius Theon of Alexandria, reportedly the author of a treatise on *progymnasmata*, several works on rhetoric and commentaries on Xenophon, Isocrates, and Demosthenes. This Aelius Theon of Alexandria is the 'leading candidate' for authorship of the *Progymnasmata*, as Kennedy claims.[20] Theon's *Progymnasmata* provides teachers in rhetoric with a series of rhetorical exercises for their students, in order to facilitate the transition from the instruction of the *grammatikos* to the training of the rhetorician.[21]

Theon's *Progymnasmata* cannot be dated with certainty, but many scholars suppose an early (i.e. first century AD) dating.[22] To Patillon, the most decisive evidence for a first-century origin is provided by the text's structure, which is remarkable when compared to other attestations of *progymnasmata*. Patillon observes that Aelius Theon places the exercise of *chreia* first, which is only in line with Suetonius' *On Grammarians and Rhetors* 25.4, but not with any other extant text. Heath, however, considers it possible that 'Theon's order, placing *chreia* first, was accepted by Athanasius, around the end of the fourth century'.[23] Heath also observes that 'Nicolaus discussed this order [i.e. the one adopted by Aelius Theon, M.S.] in the fifth century, and it is not self-evident that his discussion is purely antiquarian'.[24] In other words, the currency of Theon's *Progymnasmata* in late Antiquity – to which an Armenian translation of the treatise also testifies – is an important reason for Heath to assume

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[19] On *progymnasmata*, see e.g. Lausberg (2008), 532-546; Kraus (2005), who discusses the history of *progymnasmata* from the Hellenistic period to the twentieth century. There are three other Greek texts on the preliminary exercises to rhetoric, by pseudo-Hermogenes (third century), Aphthonius (fourth century), and Nicolaus of Myra (fifth century). Their texts are published in the *Rhetores Graeci* (ed. Spengel 1854-1856). For a discussion and English translation of these treatises, see Kennedy (2000). Heath (2002) provides an interesting discussion of the history of technical literature on rhetorical *progymnasmata*, and especially Theon's place in it. In Latin, we only have Quintilian's discussion (2.4) of twelf *primae exercitationes* in the education of grammar. On *progymnasmata* in Latin, see e.g. Bonner (1977), 250-276.

[20] Kennedy (2000), 1.

[21] Patillon (1997), xvii.

[22] Cf. e.g. Patillon (1997) and Kennedy (2000). For an overview of the discussion on the dating of Aelius Theon's work, see Stegemann (1934). I owe this reference to Heath (2002), 129, n. 1.

[23] Heath (2002), 144.

[24] *Ibid*.

a late, fifth-century AD date of composition. This assumption is based on the premise that early technical writings on rhetoric 'were preserved for functional reasons, and hence were likely to be lost when they were superseded'.[25]

To consider in depth whether Aelius Theon's *Progymnasmata* should be dated in the first or the fifth century, would be beyond the scope of this section. For now, it should be sufficient to note that Theon's particular interest in Greek writers from the Classical Period (and especially in Thucydides) may well reflect the classicising tendencies of the early Roman Empire.[26] Moreover, as we will soon see, Theon's conceptualisation of μίμησις indicates a close adherence to the ideas expressed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, to whom he also refers in *Progymnasmata* 14.[27] These observations strengthen the view that the *Progymnasmata* were conceived in the first century, and not, as Heath supposes, four centuries later.[28]

In his *Progymnasmata*, Aelius Theon discusses a range of classical Greek authors, such as Homer, Herodotus, Euripides, Thucydides, Philistus, Xenophon, Plato, Demosthenes and Theopompus. His aim is to provide his students with material suited for rhetorical exercises, which, in turn, prepare for rhetorical practice.[29] Reading their works (i.e. reading aloud or listening to others reading) is one of the three pillars of imitation distinguished by Theon – the other two being the paraphrasing of models and oral presentation. The reason why Aelius Theon recommends these authors is twofold: in the first place, their works function as the 'nourishment of style' (τροφὴ λέξεως) and thus help to acquire a rich stock of words and ideas.[30] Secondly, they offer instructive material for exercises, and, as such, greatly

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[25] Heath (2002), 143.

[26] Theon also discusses Theopompus, Philistus and Ephorus, who, as Kennedy (2000), 1 rightly argues, 'are largely ignored by later rhetoricians'.

[27] The latest authors to whom Aelius Theon refers are Theodorus of Gadara and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Kennedy (2000), 1 argues that this indicates that 'he [i.e. Aelius Theon, M.S.] was writing no earlier than the late first century BC'. The *Progymnasmata* is probably earlier than Quintilian's *Institutio*, if we accept that Quintilian refers to Aelius Theon in 3.6.48 and 9.3.76.

[28] The objection that Dionysius was also read in the fifth century AD and that Aelius Theon in this way could have come to know Dionysius' ideas (cf. Heath (2002), 11), does not offer a satisfactory explanation for Theon's classicising approach of Greek literature, which is particularly characteristic of the early Roman Empire.

[29] Cf. Ael. Th. *Progymn.* 60.1-3: ὡς δὲ καὶ παντελῶς εἰσιν ὠφέλιμα τοῖς τὴν ῥητορικὴν δύναμιν ἀναλαμβάνουσιν, οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἄδηλον ('that they [i.e. different exercises, M.S.] are quite necessary for those acquiring the art of oratory, that too is obvious'). These exercises differ in degree of difficulty and are carried out either individually or collectively.

[30] Ael. Th. *Progymn.* 61.31. The idea that reading does not only serve the acquisition of stylistic competence, but also that of 'an abundance of ideas' (τῶν διανοημάτων τὸ πλῆθος), is expressed in *Progymn.* 62.5-6. On the

contribute to a skilful rhetorical performance. Thus, 'usefulness' in the *Progymnasmata* has a formative-stylistic as well as a practical connotation.

With respect to the formation of style, Aelius Theon, like Dionysius, adopts an aesthetic approach of imitation. Virtues like 'purity of language' (τὸ περὶ τὴν λέξιν καθαρόν), a 'harmonious composition' (σύνθεσις ἡρμοσμένη) and 'urbanity of sound' (ἀκρόασις ἀστεία) are summarised as 'the beauties of the art of rhetoric' (τῶν ἐν τῇ ῥητορικῇ καλῶν), which should be observed, imitated and trained during daily exercises, in order to 'be of use' (cf. χρήσιμον) for those who are going to engage in rhetoric.[31] In the *Progymnasmata*, models (παραδείγματα) are three times designated as 'beautiful' (καλά), for instance in a passage which is devoted to the representation of character:[32]

> Προσωποποιΐας δὲ τί ἂν εἴη παράδειγμα κάλλιον τῆς Ὁμήρου ποιήσεως καὶ τῶν Πλάτωνος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν Σωκρατικῶν διαλόγων καὶ τῶν Μενάνδρου δραμάτων;[33]

> What would be a more beautiful example of representation of character than (speeches in) the poetry of Homer and the dialogues of Plato and other Socratics and the dramas of Menander?

In this passage, Theon's insistence on the beauty of models is not the only parallel with Dionysius. Also his arrangement of names reminds us of Dionysius' reading lists: the great Homer comes as the first poetic model for προσωποποιΐα, whereas Menander (who is also one

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twofold meaning of the usefulness (i.e. formative-stylistic and rhetorical-practical) of the discussion of different authors, cf. also Patillon (1997), xcix: 'Quant au bénéfice à attendre de ces lectures, il concerne sans doute le vocabulaire, mais plus généralement le style et avant cela la connaissance des éléments développés dans les discours, leur organisation et les procédés de leur mise en oeuvre. En même temps l'exercice de lecture est un entraînement à l'action oratoire, qui prépare à l'exercice public de la parole'.

[31] Ael. Th. *Progymn.* 62.6-8.

[32] Ael. Th. *Progymn.* 62.6-8. The imitation of aesthetic virtues of style also plays an important role in other passages in Aelius Theon's *Progymnasmata*. Words pertaining to 'beauty' occur almost 50 times. 'Models' (παραδείγματα) are also designated as 'beautiful' (καλά) in two other passages: *Progymn.* 61.32-33: τυπούμενοι γὰρ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ καλῶν παραδειγμάτων κάλλιστα καὶ μιμησόμεθα ('we imitate most beautifully when our mind has been stamped by beautiful examples'); *Progymn.* 66.16-18: διηγήσεως δὲ παραδείγματα ἂν εἴη κάλλιστα τῶν μὲν μυθικῶν ἢ Πλάτωνος ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ τῆς Πολιτείας περὶ τοῦ δακτυλίου τοῦ Γύγου ('the most beautiful examples of narration of the mythical sort would be those by Plato in the second book of the *Republic* on the ring of Gyges').

[33] Ael. Th. *Progymn.* 68.22-25.

of the literary champions of Dio and Quintilian) closes the list.[34] Likewise, in Dionysius (and Quintilian), Menander, the great figurehead of comic poetry, closes the row in which Homer takes place as the first poet to be imitated.

Theon does not differentiate between μίμησις and ζῆλος, but seems to use the verb μιμήσασθαι to refer to the process of imitation and emulation as a whole – just as Dionysius mostly does.[35] It is evident that Theon does not have a purely technical and rational mimetic process in mind, but one in which one's natural abilities are also involved. In fact, he is of the opinion that innate capacities should be augmented and complemented with exercises:

> […] πειρατέον τὰ μὲν φυσικὰ πλεονεκτήματα αὔξειν, τὰ δὲ ἐλλείποντα ταῖς ἀσκήσεσιν ἀναπληροῦν […].[36]

> We should try to augment natural advantages and fill in deficiencies with exercises.

Theon's goal is to encourage his students to achieve rhetorical versatility and concentrate not only on great subjects, as did Aeschines, or only on small subjects, as did Lysias, but to have 'preparation for both, as did Demosthenes' (πρὸς ἀμφότερα παρασκευὴν […], ὡς Δημοσθένης).[37] His insistence on rhetorical versatility is also reflected in his recommendation to read a wide variety of models – an idea to which also Dionysius, as we have seen, strongly adheres. The old-Armenian translation of parts of Theon's *Progymnasmata*, for the content of which I must rely on the French translation of Patillon, contains a passage on the need of eclecticism and personal adaptation in the process of imitation:

> 'Lorsque quelqu'un admire ce qu'il y a de bon chez tous et entreprend d'y conformer sa pensée, du fait qu'il existe en lui une sorte de matrice du discours, que chacun peut modeler d'après sa propre nature, il ne se voit pas contraint à fixer les yeux sur un style, mais il acquiert spontanément à son usage personnel une part de tous ces biens'.[38]

In language which is strongly reminiscent of the sculptural metaphor used by Dionysius to describe μίμησις, Aelius Theon makes it clear that imitation is about a personal modelling of a

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[34] For Menander in Dionysius and Quintilian, see e.g. section 4.4.

[35] The verb μιμήσασθαι occurs twice: see Ael. Th. *Progymn*. 61.33; 71.1.

[36] Ael. Th. *Progymn*. 72.20-22.

[37] Ael. Th. *Progymn*. 72.23-24.

[38] Patillon (1997), 105.

'matrix of speech', which consists of the best characteristics of different models.[39] Moreover, imitation involves a conformation of the imitator's mind to what is good in a wide variety of authors. These two crucial elements, of modelling and mental conformation, are echoed in two other passages. The language of modelling recurs in a passage concerning the pedagogical method of ἀνάγνωσις ('reading aloud'):[40]

> […] τυπούμενοι γὰρ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ καλῶν παραδειγμάτων κάλλιστα καὶ μιμησόμεθα […].[41]

> […] we will imitate most beautifully when our mind has been stamped by beautiful examples.

Here, an artistic activity (see τυπούμενοι) has the 'soul' (ψυχή) as its direct object, not a matrix or 'standard' of speech, as is the case in the French translation of the old-Armenian text of the *Progymnasmata*.[42]

The image of mental conformation recurs when Aelius Theon elaborates on the internalisation of the fundaments provided by classical models:

> Ἔστι γὰρ ταῦτα οἱονεὶ θεμέλια πάσης τῆς τῶν λόγων ἰδέας, καὶ ὡς ἂν αὐτά τις ὑπάγηται τῇ τῶν νέων ψυχῇ, ἀνάγκη τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα συμβαίνειν […].[43]

> These [i.e. the various exercices taken from the literary models discussed, M.S.] are, as it were, the foundation of every kind of discourse, and depending on how one instills them in the soul of the young, necessarily the results make themselves felt in the same way later.

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[39] Cf. Dion. Hal. *Imit*. fr. III U-R = 2 Aujac = 2 Battisti, discussed in sections 2.2.1 and 3.3.1.

[40] Cf. Bompaire (1958), 42, who points to the connection between this passage in Aelius Theon and Dion. Hal. *Imit*. 1.2. Cf. also Cizek (1994), 42, who points to the connection between this passage in Aelius Theon and Dionysius' emphasis on the contemplation of beautiful models in his story on the ugly farmer (*Imit*. 1.2).

[41] Ael. Th. *Progymn*. 61.32-33. Hunter (2014), 20, n. 1 observes: 'Theon is here very close to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *On Imitation*'.

[42] Cf. Ael. Th. *Progymn*. 13.

[43] Ael. Th. *Progymn*. 70.29-31.

The similarities with Dionysius' image of a 'stream' (ῥεῦμα) which the imitator 'canalises into his soul' (εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν μετοχετεύσῃ) are striking, and may well be explained by assuming that Aelius Theon was familiar with Dionysius' conceptualisation of imitation, and/or drew from and contributed to the same discourse of imitation as he did.[44]

We may conclude that for Aelius Theon – as for Dionysius –, the process of imitation as a whole involves more than artfully creating something new to the likeness of models: it comprises mental engagement with, conformation to and even integration of these models, in order to compose a beautiful, new text which is in accordance with one's own nature.[45]

5.3 SENECA'S *LETTER TO LUCILIUS* 84

Seneca's *Letter to Lucilius* 84 is a private epistle addressed to his friend Lucilius, in which the process and purpose of careful reading and writing are discussed. It is generally assumed that Seneca composed this and the other letters to Lucilius in his final years – that means, in the period 63-65 AD.[46] Many of Seneca's letters are characterised by a similar structure, presenting a concrete event – for instance a voyage, as in *Letter* 84 – as the direct occasion and justification of philosophically inspired reflections on subjects of very diverse nature. The general character of the letters can thus be considered essayistic rather than personal; the addressee Lucilius is often mentioned by name, but, as Gummere observes, 'his identity is secondary to the main purpose'.[47] This is also true for the addressees of Dionysius' 'letter-essays': Pompeius (*Letter to Pompeius*), Ammaeus (*Two Letters to Ammaeus*), as well as for

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[44] Dion. Hal. *Imit*. 1.3. Cf. Plut. *Aem*. 1.3: τὰς τῶν ἀρίστων καὶ δοκιμωτάτων μνήμας ὑποδεχομένους ἀεὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ('always receiving in the soul the records of the noblest and most estimable characters') (tr. adapted from Perrin 1918). Whitmarsh (2001), 55-57 briefly discusses Plutarch's idea of μίμησις as a process of 'receiving' (ὑποδεχομένους) good exemplars into the soul. He argues that through this mental reception models get 'an actual physical presence' (*ibid*., 55). For Dionysius' conception of μίμησις as embodiment of models, see Wiater (2011), 92: '*Mimesis* describes both the process by which classical *ethos* is acquired through reading and by which it is enacted through composing Classical texts. Dionysius ascribes to language an almost physical immediacy […]'.

[45] Cf. Patillon (1997), xcix: '[…] il [i.e. Aelius Theon, M.S.] indique aussi que l'imitation n'est pas une pure copie des modèles, mais une assimilation qui permet à chacun de modeler son propre style d'après sa propre nature. C'est, en condensé, la même théorie que celle qu'on lit dans l'exposé du traité sur l'*Imitation* de Denys d'Halicarnasse et dans le chapitre (10, 2) que Quintilien consacre au même sujet'.

[46] See e.g. Gummere (1917), xi.

[47] Gummere (1917), xii.

Demetrius (the addressee of *On Imitation*). In the works addressed to them, personal affairs are overshadowed by literary-critical issues.[48]

'Imitation' is the central topic of *Letter* 84. Seneca does not explicate what kind of imitation he is writing about: rhetorical, literary or philosophical imitation. One passage, however, reveals that he must have been thinking of rhetorical imitation in particular:

> *"Quid ergo? Non intellegetur, cuius imiteris orationem, cuius argumentationem, cuius sententias?"*[49]

> "What," you say, "will it not be seen whose speech you are imitating, whose method of reasoning, whose pungent sayings?"

What texts should be the objects of imitation, is not clear from Seneca's words. He recommends reading literature in general, without distinguishing between prose and poetry, or between literary genres. Hence, we may infer that he advocates the imitation of all useful sorts of literature within a rhetorical context. His quote of Vergil's *Georgics* (84.3) also points to this.

As we will see in this section, the most important message that Seneca conveys in *Letter* 84 is that the process of imitation ideally consists of two phases: 1) the eclectic assemblage of the best virtues of a wide variety of literary models, and 2) the digestion and internalisation of these virtues in order to compose an original and harmonious literary unity. Seneca does not distinguish between *imitari* and *aemulari* in his *Letter* 84.[50] Only the verb *imitari* occurs in *Letter* 84, and in both of the two cases in a sentence which exhorts the reader to 'follow the example of the bees' (*apes [...] imitari*), whose behaviour, as Seneca says, stands model for the successive stages within the process of imitation.[51] Thus, the verb *imitari*

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[48] The term 'letter-essay' is adopted from Stirewalt (1991), who argues that letters such as Dionysius' were intended to be read by a wider audience.

[49] Sen. *Ep*. 84.8.

[50] It is remarkable that also Tacitus does not distinguish between *imitatio* and *aemulatio* in his *Dialogue on Oratory* (section 5.6) – nor does Dio in *Oration* 18 (section 5.7), but he differentiates between μίμησις and ζῆλος in many other works. As I see it, the lack of distinction between literary *imitatio* and *aemulatio* and μίμησις and ζῆλος can be explained by the fact that the subject of imitation is not discussed in a critical, theoretical way.

[51] Sen. *Ep*. 84.3: *apes, ut aiunt, debemus imitari* ('we should follow, men say, the example of the bees'); *Ep*. 84.5: *nos quoque has apes debemus imitari* ('we also ought to copy these bees'). For the reception of Seneca's image of the bees in the Renaissance (esp. in Petrarca), see Jansen (2008), 279-284.

in Seneca's *Letter* 84 does not pertain to the actual imitation of literary masterpieces, but to the imitation of those reputedly involved in a rather comparable process: the honeybees.

Seneca complicates his analogy with the bees somewhat by referring to two different explanations for the origin of honey.[52] The first depends on what people say happens in India, namely that honey as such is produced by a dew particularly characteristic of that climate. This sediment of honey is reputedly gathered by bees from the leaves of reed. Hence, in this version, in which traces of the concept of πνεῦμα (a composite of the elements air and fire (warmth), i.e. ἀήρ) can be seen, honey is not the result of the fermentation of nectar by bees, but a purely natural and unprocessed product from heaven. Thus, the bees need only gather the honey from the leaves of reed. Remarkably enough, Seneca does not dismiss this explanation, which consequently keeps resonating and surrounds the process of imitation with an air of divine miraculousness and inspiration, even when a more probable alternative is offered.[53] According to this explanation, honey is obtained by 'storage and conservation' (*conditura et dispositione*) as well as 'fermentation' (*fermento*) of what the bees 'have culled from the most delicate of blooming and flowering plants' (*ex tenerrimis virentium florentiumque decerpserint*).[54]

Seneca transposes this latter explanation to the field of literature, arguing that the imitative production of a harmonious blend of literary virtues requires the tough efforts exhibited by the bees. In using this bee simile for the imitative production of literature, Seneca is certainly not alone. The image of bees ranging among different flowers and plants is a true *topos*, already used by Pindar to refer to the imitative production of a new piece of literature, but also very prominent in e.g. Plato's *Ion*, Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, Lucretius, Horace's *Ode* 4.2 and in the fourth book of Vergil's *Georgics*, at least if one is willing to interpret this didactic poem metaphorically.[55] Like the bees, we must, Seneca urges, make a good selection of works to be imitated:

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[52] Sen. *Ep*. 84.4.

[53] Seneca's refusal to reject the first version of the spontaneous origin of honey explicitly is somewhat confusing, especially since the idea of being free from efforts of processing recurs when Seneca discusses the processing of food in our stomach, which happens naturally and 'without any labour' (*sine ulla opera nostra*, *Ep*. 84.6). In many other passages, however, Seneca underscores the importance of 'constant effort' (*adsidua intentio*, *Ep*. 84.11). An explanation for this apparent contradiction may be that Seneca sometimes considers our soul a separate entity, which naturally digests the spiritual food without needing our supervision, whereas in most cases, he conceives of 'we' and 'our soul' as collaborating parts.

[54] Sen. *Ep*. 84.4.

[55] Pind. *Pyth*. 10.53-54; Pl. *Ion*; Call. *Ap*. 110-112; Lucr. *DRN* 3.11-12; Hor. *Od*. 4.2.25-32; Verg. *G*. 4.

[...] quaecumque ex diversa lectione congessimus, separare [...], deinde adhibita ingenii nostri cura et facultate in unum saporem varia illa libamenta confundere [...].[56]

[We must, M.S.] sift whatever we have gathered from a varied course of reading […], then, by applying the supervising care with which our nature has endowed us, […] we should blend those several flavours into one delicious compound.

Thus, imitation requires 'constant effort' (*adsidua intentio*) and can be considered a skilful digestion and unification of various literary materials.

As we have seen, the image of the soul plays an important role in the conceptualisation of imitation in Dionysius and Aelius Theon. In Seneca's *Letter* 84, the activity of reception and internalisation of the best paradigms of literature is accomplished by what he calls our 'mind' (*ingenium*, also called *animus*).[57] The philosophical notions of *ingenium* and *animus*, the exact meaning of which is not easy to grasp, play a crucial role in Seneca's conception of imitation.

The four different renderings by Gummere for *ingenium* in *Letter* 84 (i.e. 'mind', 'nature', 'higher nature' and 'reasoning power') are clear indications of the elusiveness of the term.[58] Its meaning becomes even more puzzling when Seneca all of a sudden substitutes it with the term *animus* in the second part of *Letter* 84.[59] *Letter* 114, which deals with different literary styles, reveals that Seneca conceives of *ingenium* and *animus* as two distinctive, but closely 'interwoven' (*permixtum*) psychological entities.[60] The former (*ingenium*) pertains to our speaking ability, which can be seen as the embodiment of the latter, our 'mind' (*animus*).[61] As Graver puts it, *ingenium* 'provides a means to observe the character of the *animus* […]'.[62]

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[56] Sen. *Ep*. 84.5. For the idea of a mixture of the best literary qualities of models, cf. e.g. Dion. Hal. *Imit*. 5.7. Of course, the comparison with bees gathering their nectar falls short in that nectar is a product of nature, while the literary masterpieces of yore are not.

[57] The word *ingenium* occurs in Sen. *Ep*. 84.1, 5, 6, 7.

[58] Gummere (1920).

[59] The word *animus* occurs in Sen. *Ep*. 84. 7, 10. It is used in the second part of the letter, whereas *ingenium* appears in the first part.

[60] Sen. *Ep*. 114.3.

[61] Cf. Graver (2014), 281: '*ingenium* does sometimes refer to one's intellectual aptitude in a broad sense, and with qualifiers added it may also indicate other aspects of temperament; a *saevum ingenium*, for instance, is a

In *Letter* 84, *ingenium* and *animus* both refer to the deepest layers of our intellect, but we should note that there is a subtle difference. *Ingenium* can fulfill different roles within the process of mimetic nourishment: it can be nourished by reading (cf. *alit lectio ingenium*, 84.1 / *his, quibus aluntur ingenia*, 84.6), but it also contributes to digestion after reading (cf. *adhibita ingenii nostri cura*, 84.5). When the term *animus* appears, the scope of *imitatio* is broadened; *animus* is an ordering principle, used with respect to the storage (cf. *abscondat*, 84.8) and presentation (cf. *ostendat*, *ibid.*) of 'all things by which it [i.e. *animus*, M.S.] has been aided' (*omnia, quibus est adiutus, ibid.*). These things include the following:

> *Talem animum nostrum esse volo; multae in illo artes, multa praecepta sint, multarum aetatum exempla, sed in unum conspirata.*[63]

> I want our mind to be like this; many arts, many precepts, and examples taken from many epochs of history should form part of it, but all should blend into one.

Seneca combines the idea of *ingenium* and *animus* which internalise the influence of different models with the metaphor of spiritual nourishment and digestion, to which, as we have seen, also Aelius Theon pays attention, and which can also be found in Quintilian. While emphasising the importance of careful and repeated reading, the latter urges his readers to 'let their reading be made available for memory and imitation, not in an undigested form, but, as it were, softened and pulverised by frequent repetition' (*lectio non cruda sed multa iteratione mollita et velut confecta memoriae imitationique tradatur*).[64] According to Seneca, however, 'reading nourishes the mind' (*alit lectio ingenium*), which, in turn, has to digest what has been read, lest it becomes a 'burden' (*onus*):[65]

> *Quod in corpore nostro videmus sine ulla opera nostra facere naturam: alimenta, quae accepimus, quamdiu in sua qualitate perdurant et solida innatant stomacho, onera sunt; at cum ex eo, quod erant, mutata sunt, tum demum in vires et in sanguinem transeunt. Idem in his, quibus aluntur ingenia, praestemus, ut quaecumque*

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warlike temperament. But in Seneca it often refers much more narrowly to a person's rhetorical and literary abilities as demonstrated in actual pieces of writing'.

[62] Graver (2014), 283.

[63] Sen. *Ep*. 84.10-11.

[64] Quint. 10.1.19. Cf. Quint. 10.1.58 for another metaphor of food.

[65] Sen. *Ep*. 84.1. The activity of reading stimulates the imitator's *iudicium* and *cogitatio* – terms which Seneca applies in the first lines of his letter. On the burden of undigested food, see Sen. *Ep*. 84.6.

hausimus, non patiamur integra esse, ne aliena sint. Concoquamus illa; alioqui in memoriam ibunt, non in ingenium. Adsentiamur illis fideliter et nostra faciamus, ut unum quiddam fiat ex multis [...].[66]

This is what we see nature doing in our own bodies without any labour on our part; the food we have eaten, as long as it retains its original quality and floats in our stomachs as an undiluted mass, is a burden; but it passes into force and blood only when it has been changed from its original form. So it is with the food that nourishes our mind, – we should see to it that whatever we have absorbed should not be allowed to remain unchanged, or it will be no part of us. We must digest it; otherwise it will merely enter the memory and not the mind. Let us loyally welcome such foods and make them our own, so that something that is one may be formed out of many elements […].

For Seneca, entrance of literary food into the 'memory' (*memoria*) is not sufficient for original imitation; Quintilian advises that through a process of thorough digestion 'reading should be made available to memory and imitation' (*lectio [...] memoriae imitationique tradatur*). The difference between Quintilian and Seneca may be explained by pointing to the context of Quintilian's advice. He is concerned with novice students in oratory who should learn to form their own opinions in response to reading literature. In this primary stage of their training, *imitatio* – which means basic repetition – is an essential part of the curriculum, whereas the requirement of originality is embedded in the program for the advanced student, who pursues *aemulatio*. By contrast, Seneca is addressing his younger friend Lucilius.

Food is not only used by Seneca as an image for the wide range of literature that has to become an inherent part of our mind. Also the final product of our digestion of literature is portrayed in terms of nourishment. What we have to compose from all different literary ingredients is a harmonious meal, of which every single component may or may not be recognizable.[67] By implication, the process of imitation is seen as an endless chain; after

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[66] Sen. *Ep*. 84.6-7.

[67] Cf. Sen. *Ep*. 84.5: *[...] ut etiam si apparuerit, unde sumptum sit, aliud tamen esse quam unde sumptum est, appareat* ('even though it [i.e. the new composition, M.S.] betrays its origin, yet it nevertheless is clearly a different thing from that whence it came'); *Ep*. 84.8: *puto aliquando ne intellegi quidem posse, si imago vera sit; haec enim omnibus, quae ex quo velut exemplari traxit, formam suam inpressit, ut in unitatem illa conpetant* ('I think that sometimes it is impossible for it to be seen who is being imitated, if the copy is a true one; for a true copy stamps its own form upon all the features which it has drawn from what we may call the original, in such a way that they are combined into a unity').

having digested the delicacies from a rich variety of banquets, every respectable author will himself prepare an original and harmonious 'compound' (*saporem*) to be digested by others.[68]

Seneca's insistence on the originality of the imitator's composition is strengthened by the analogy of the relationship between a father and son. Although a son's physiognomy often resembles that of his father, he is no dead copy (*imago [...] mortua*) of him, but instead a living variation with unique features. When we transpose this to the field of literature, it means that even when traces of likeness with the literary paragon are perceivable (which is not a *conditio sine qua non*), the newly composed work should – as is in accordance with nature – bear the true sign of individuality and originality.[69]

This way of conceiving the process of imitation is reminiscent of the introductory story on the ugly farmer which precedes the Greek reading list in Dionysius' treatise *On imitation*.[70] Here, the figure of the father does not symbolise the whole complex of literary models, but the imitator (i.e. the farmer) himself, whose relationship with his children is one of complete dissimilarity. His children, like amalgams, mirror the beauty of the different models which were at the disposition of the farmer's wife, but they do not exactly match with any one of them in particular. Thus, for Seneca as for Dionysius, new texts are unique variations on a variety of congenital themes.

According to Seneca, however, originality is not the only characteristic of a good composition. In his *Letter* 84, an even more prominent role is reserved for the requirement of unity. We have seen that Seneca emphasises the notion of unity by the analogy of a balanced meal consisting of a wide variety of ingredients, but he also elaborates on it by sketching a picture of a choir 'which the old-time philosophers knew' (*quem veteres philosophi noverant*), the blended sound of which arises from the multiplicity of separate voices and instruments:

> *Non vides, quam multorum vocibus chorus constet? Unus tamen ex omnibus redditur; aliqua illic acuta est, aliqua gravis, aliqua media. Accedunt viris feminae, interponuntur tibiae. Singulorum illic latent voces, omnium apparent.*[71]

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[68] Sen. *Ep*. 84.5.

[69] Cf. the brief discussion of *Letter* 84 by Henderson (2004), 46-47, who argues with respect to Seneca's analogy of the relationship between a father and son: 'we are to put *our* raw materials under wraps, and show up our *product* instead. Even if admiration fixes deep in you the 'likeness' of a paragon [...]'.

[70] For this story, see section 1.3.

[71] Sen. *Ep*. 84.9-10.

Do you not see how many voices there are in a chorus? Yet out of them all only one voice results. In that chorus one voice takes the tenor, another the bass, another the baritone. There are women, too, as well as men, and the flute is mingled with them. In that chorus the voices of the individual singers are hidden; what we hear is the voices of all together.

All these different vocal and instrumental sounds from the past represent various literary models from different periods of time, which can be made to resonate simultaneously in a new, harmonious text.[72] Seen in this way, Seneca's *Letter* 84, with its accumulation of allusions, analogies and metaphors, is itself a patchwork of reminiscences of a wide range of Greek and Latin texts.

5.4 LONGINUS' *ON THE SUBLIME*

As much as we know of Seneca, as little do we know of the author of the treatise *On the Sublime*.[73] Of the most important, tenth-century manuscript of the treatise, a meagre sixty percent has come down to us. The copyist of this manuscript (Parisinus 2036), a Byzantine scholar, probably copied an anonymous text of *On the Sublime*, which urged him to speculate on its authorship. His manuscript has in the title 'Dionysius Longinus' and in the table of contents 'Dionysius or Longinus', two authors of critical treatises on rhetoric whom the copyist apparently regarded as plausible candidates for authorship of *On the Sublime*. Dionysius should be identified as 'our' Dionysius of Halicarnassus, whereas the name of Longinus refers to the third-century author Cassius Longinus.

It has often been argued that both options are implausible.[74] Considering the style of *On the Sublime*, Dionysius is unlikely to be the author of the treatise. The same holds true for Cassius Longinus, whose aesthetic views are not in line with the ideas expressed in *On the Sublime*. Heath, however, did not accept this conclusion. He thoroughly re-examined all

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[72] Here again, Seneca applies a metaphor commonly used to describe the euphony of great works of literature.

[73] The following information on date and authorship of *On the Sublime* is mainly based on Russell (1964), xxii-xxx.

[74] On date and authorship of *On the Sublime*, see further e.g. Crossett & Arieti (1975); Fyfe & Russell (1995), 145-148; Heath (1999).

available arguments, on the basis of which he designated Cassius Longinus as the author.[75] His article, however, did not enjoy undivided acclaim.

As De Jonge, reacting to Heath's dating, makes clear, 'one of the most important arguments against the authorship of Cassius Longinus is the final chapter of *Peri hupsous*: the discussion of the decline of rhetoric fits the first rather than the third century C.E., and the reference to "the world's peace" […] suits the Augustan period rather than the third century C.E.'.[76] Thus, since Dionysius is not a likely candidate, we are invited to suppose a first-century author, whom we refer to by the name Longinus for convenience.[77] In line with De Jonge's claim that there is a remarkable continuity between the critical discourse of the concept of the 'sublime' in Dionysius and Longinus, we will see that the Platonic-inspired conceptualisation of the process of imitation in both critics is also in remarkable accordance, and may well confirm the idea of a first-century date of Longinus' activity.

The treatise *On the Sublime* is framed as a polemical response to a work written by the Augustan critic Caecilius of Caleacte. This work by Caecilius is lost, but judging from the words of Longinus, it was a technical treatise (τεχνολογία, 1.1) on the sublime which did not live up to its practical purposes.[78] Longinus argues that it merely showed what the sublime is, not in what ways the sublime could be obtained.[79] By contrast, Longinus sets his mind on showing his otherwise unknown Roman addressee, the young man (cf. ὦ νεανία, 15.1) Postumius Terentianus, how the sublime should be defined, and on fulfilling the pragmatic aspirations that Caecilius in his opinion could not accomplish: he shows his readers the ways which lead to the sublime, one of which is, as we will see, μίμησις.[80] In spite of the lofty and almost poetic style which he uses to describe such concepts as genius and divine inspiration, Longinus announces his treatise *On the Sublime* as a 'notebook' (ὑπόμνημα, cf. ὑπομνηματίσασθαι, 1.2) which is supposed to be 'of value for public speakers' (ἀνδράσι πολιτικοῖς […] χρήσιμον, *ibid*.) who want to achieve sublimity of style.[81]

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[75] Heath (1999).

[76] De Jonge (2012), 273, n. 5.

[77] Following common practice, I will use this name for the author of the treatise *On the Sublime*.

[78] For the relationship between Longinus and Caecilius of Caleacte, see Innes (2002). She exploits evidence from Tiberius' *On Figures in Demosthenes*, which has been influenced by Caecilius' treatise.

[79] Longin. *Subl*. 1.1.

[80] Fyfe & Russell (1995), 148 suggest that Postumius Terentianus is the Terentianus who served in Egypt in 85/86 AD (cf. Martial 1.86), or the man whose name is on a lead water pipe of the second century (C.I.L. XV.2.7373). This, however, is mere speculation.

[81] Longin. *Subl*. 1.1. Cf. also *Subl*. 36.1: οὐκοῦν ἐπί γε τῶν ἐν λόγοις μεγαλοφυῶν, ἐφ᾽ ὧν οὐκέτ᾽ ἔξω

What, then, does sublimity mean, and how is it related to imitation? In a *praeteritio*, Longinus argues that the wide knowledge of his addressee Postumius Terentianus eliminates the need to elaborate on 'how the sublime consists in a consummate excellence and distinction of language and that this alone gave to the greatest poets and prose writers their preeminence and clothed them with immortal fame' (ὡς ἀκρότης καὶ ἐξοχή τις λόγων ἐστὶ τὰ ὕψη, καὶ ποιητῶν τε οἱ μέγιστοι καὶ συγγραφέων οὐκ ἄλλοθεν ἢ ἐνθένδε ποθὲν ἐπρώτευσαν καὶ ταῖς ἑαυτῶν περιέβαλον εὐκλείαις τὸν αἰῶνα).[82] To Longinus, this excellence and distinction of language is brilliantly shown by Homer, Demosthenes and Plato, whose sublimity of style should be the focus of our imitation:

> Οὐκοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς, ἡνίκ᾿ ἂν διαπονῶμεν ὑψηγορίας τι καὶ μεγαλοφροσύνης δεόμενον, καλὸν ἀναπλάττεσθαι ταῖς ψυχαῖς, πῶς ἂν εἰ τύχοι ταὐτὸ τοῦθ᾿ Ὅμηρος εἶπεν, πῶς δ᾿ ἂν Πλάτων ἢ Δημοσθένης ὕψωσαν ἢ ἐν ἱστορίᾳ Θουκυδίδης.[83]

> We too, then, when we are working at some passage that demands sublimity of expression and greatness of mind, should do well to form in our souls the question, 'how might Homer have said this same thing, how would Plato or Demosthenes or (in history) Thucydides have made it sublime'?

From this statement, we can deduce two important things. In the first place, for Longinus, sublimity is not restricted to any genre in particular: it can be found in all manifestations of literature. In the second place, imitation serves the concept of the sublime. This is made explicit by Longinus in the following passage:

> Ἐνδείκνυται δ᾿ ἡμῖν οὗτος ἀνήρ, εἰ βουλοίμεθα μὴ κατολιγωρεῖν, ὡς καὶ ἄλλη τις παρὰ τὰ εἰρημένα ὁδὸς ἐπὶ τὰ ὑψηλὰ τείνει. Ποία δὲ καὶ τίς αὕτη; Τῶν ἔμπροσθεν μεγάλων συγγραφέων καὶ ποιητῶν μίμησίς τε καὶ ζήλωσις. Καί γε τούτου, φίλτατε, ἀπρὶξ ἐχώμεθα τοῦ σκοποῦ [...].[84]

> Here is an author [i.e. Plato, M.S.] who shows us, if we choose not to ignore it, that there is another road, besides those we have mentioned, which leads to sublimity.

τῆς χρείας καὶ ὠφελείας πίπτει τὸ μέγεθος ('in dealing, then, with writers of genius, whose grandeur is of a kind that comes within the limits of use and profit').

[82] Longin. *Subl*. 1.3.

[83] Longin. *Subl*. 14.1. On the same authors (except for Thucydides), cf. *Subl*. 36.2.

[84] Longin. *Subl*. 13.2. This passage is also briefly discussed in section 2.2.1.

What and what manner of road is this? Imitation and emulation of the great prose writers and poets of the past. That is the aim, dear friend; let us hold to it with all our might.

Not only the idea of blurring poetry and prose in the selection phase of imitation, but also the emphasis on eminence as the ultimate goal of all imitative efforts, is in line with the message that Dionysius puts forward in his treatise *On Imitation*.

Before turning to Longinus' notions of μίμησίς and ζήλωσις, it is important to examine what the sublime, to which i.a. imitation should lead, encompasses.[85] 'Sublimity' is obviously not a qualification of the grand style (as opposed to the middle and plain style). Rather, the sublime is, in the words of Russell, a 'special effect', which inspires the author and makes the audience ecstatic.[86] Since sublimity does not depend on register of style, it can be found in the eminent works of Homer and Plato, but also in a simple utterance of Moses in *Genesis*.[87] What makes expressions sublime, is the author's sharp sense for 'the appropriate moment' (καιρός) to use them in order to enchant the audience and carry it away.[88] The impact of the sublime is often unexpected like a thunderbolt – a metaphor by which Longinus illustrates the

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[85] For a thorough discussion of the essence of the sublime, see e.g. Porter (2012), who designates the sublime not as an 'aesthetic value', but as a 'measure of thought pressed to its utmost limits' (*ibid*., 68).

[86] Russell (1964), 37. Interestingly, in Dionysius, the term ὕψος can be used to describe 'the general style of a longer passage', as De Jonge (2012), 284 makes clear. However, Dionysius too 'knows something similar to the sublime effect that is Longinus' concern' (*ibid*.), since he distinguishes 'sublimity' (ὕψος) as one of the ancillary qualities of style which implicates a strong involvement of the audience. As a striking example, De Jonge (2012) cites a passage (*ibid*., 284-285) in which Dionysius argues why Lysias' style is *not* sublime or grand, 'nor has the power to grip the listener's attention, and to keep it in rapt suspense' (οὐδὲ ἀφὰς ἔχει καὶ τόνους ἰσχυροὺς, *Lys*. 13.4). On the relation between Dionysius' and Longinus' conception of the sublime, see further Porter (2016), 235-245.

[87] For the words of Moses, see Longin. *Subl*. 9.9: "εἶπεν ὁ θεός," φησί· τί; "γενέσθω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο· γενέσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγένετο" ("God said"—what? 'let there be light,' and there was light, 'Let there be earth,' and there was earth.").

[88] On the concept of καιρός in Longinus, cf. Innes (2002), 67. For the effects upon the audience, see e.g. Longin. *Subl*. 1.4: οὐ γὰρ εἰς πειθὼ τοὺς ἀκροωμένους ἀλλ' εἰς ἔκστασιν ἄγει τὰ ὑπερφυᾶ· πάντη δέ γε σὺν ἐκπλήξει τοῦ πιθανοῦ καὶ τοῦ πρὸς χάριν ἀεὶ κρατεῖ τὸ θαυμάσιον […] ('for the effect of genius is not to persuade the audience but rather to transport them out of themselves. Invariably what inspires wonder, with its power of amazing us, always prevails over what is merely convincing and pleasing'); Longin. *Subl*. 30.1: ἡ τῶν κυρίων καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶν ὀνομάτων ἐκλογὴ θαυμαστῶς ἄγει καὶ κατακηλεῖ τοὺς ἀκούοντας ('the choice of the right word and the fine word has a marvellously moving and seductive effect upon an audience').

magnificent ferocity of Demosthenes.[89] However, the element of abruptness may also be absent, as is shown by Cicero, whose sublime style burns like 'a spreading fire' (ἀμφιλαφής τις ἐμπρησμός).[90] Also crucial for understanding the concept of the sublime is the element of 'risk': in trying to reach the peaks of sublimity, one has to confront the ever-looming danger of falling down, unlike those who decide to stay on firm ground:

> […] μήποτε δὲ τοῦτο καὶ ἀναγκαῖον ἦ, τὸ τὰς μὲν ταπεινὰς καὶ μέσας φύσεις διὰ τὸ μηδαμῆ παρακινδυνεύειν μηδὲ ἐφίεσθαι τῶν ἄκρων ἀναμαρτήτους ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ καὶ ἀσφαλεστέρας διαμένειν, τὰ δὲ μεγάλα ἐπισφαλῆ δι᾽ αὐτὸ γίνεσθαι τὸ μέγεθος.[91]

> Perhaps it is inevitable that humble, mediocre natures, because they never run any risks and never aim at the heights, should remain to a large extent safe from error, while in great natures their very greatness spells danger.

How, then, do μίμησις and ζήλωσις, which are presented as 'another way' (ἄλλη τις […] ὁδός, 13.2) leading to the sublime, fit into Longinus' general scheme of five 'sources' (πηγαί) of the sublime? Let us start with the sources. Longinus distinguishes 1) 'the power of grand conceptions' (τὸ περὶ τὰς νοήσεις ἁδρεπήβολον), 2) 'the inspiration of vehement emotion' (τὸ σφοδρὸν καὶ ἐνθουσιαστικὸν πάθος), 3) 'the proper construction of figures' (ἥ τε ποιὰ τῶν σχημάτων πλάσις), 4) 'nobility of language' (ἡ γενναία φράσις), and 5) 'dignified and elevated word-arrangement' (ἡ ἐν ἀξιώματι καὶ διάρσει σύνθεσις).[92] It is evident that 'imitation' cannot be seen as an equal counterpart of these five categories, forming, as it were,

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[89] Longin. *Subl.* 12.4.

[90] *Ibid.* For the metaphor of thunder and lightning used to describe the overwhelming and ardent power of rhetorical sublimity in Longinus, see *Subl.* 1.4: ὕψος δέ που καιρίως ἐξενεχθὲν τά τε πράγματα δίκην σκηπτοῦ πάντα διεφόρησε ('a well-timed flash of sublimity shatters everything like a bolt of lightning'); *Subl.* 12.4: ὁ μὲν ἡμέτερος διὰ τὸ μετὰ βίας ἕκαστα ἔτι δὲ τάχους ῥώμης δεινότητος οἷον καίειν τε ἅμα καὶ διαρπάζειν σκηπτῷ [in deviation from Fyfe & Russell (1995), who read σκηπρῷ, M.S.] τινι παρεικάζοιτ᾽ ἂν ἢ κεραυνῷ ('our countryman [i.e. Demosthenes, M.S.] with his violence, yes, and his speed, his force, his terrific power of rhetoric, burns, as it were, and scatters everything before him, and may therefore be compared to a flash of lightning or a thunderbolt'); *Subl.* 34.4: ὡσπερεὶ καταβροντᾷ καὶ καταφέγγει τοὺς ἀπ᾽ αἰῶνος ῥήτορας· καὶ θᾶττον ἄν τις κεραυνοῖς φερομένοις ἀντανοῖξαι τὰ ὄμματα δύναιτο ἢ ἀντοφθαλμῆσαι τοῖς ἐπαλλήλοις ἐκείνου πάθεσιν ('[Demosthenes, M.S.] out-thunders, as it were, and outshines orators of every age. You could sooner open your eyes to the descent of a thunderbolt than face his repeated outbursts of emotion without blinking').

[91] Longin. *Subl.* 33.2.

[92] Longin. *Subl.* 8.1.

a sixth source. Rather, imitation is, as James Porter has pointed out, the 'premise' of the treatise *On the Sublime*.[93] It is the actual answer to the question by which means 'we may be enabled to develop our natures to some degree of grandeur' (δι' ὅτου τρόπου τὰς ἑαυτῶν φύσεις προάγειν ἰσχύοιμεν ἂν εἰς ποσὴν μεγέθους ἐπίδοσιν).[94] The five sources of the sublime can be considered different technical domains of sublime writing which 'produce sublimity as their effect', as Porter puts it.[95]

Since imitation is the premise of *On the Sublime*, it is crucial to understand what Longinus means by it. He only differentiates between μίμησις and ζήλωσις in the passage which presents these concepts as 'another way' leading to the sublime' (13.2, see above).[96] First of all, something must be said about Longinus' use of ζήλωσις instead of ζῆλος (ζήλωσις being a fairly rare derivative of ζηλόω). We see the term ζήλωσις gaining ground only from the first century AD onwards, in authors such as Philo of Alexandria, Flavius Josephus, Cassius Dio, John Chrysostom and Damascius. The suffix -σις of ζήλωσις not only emphasises the close connection between μίμησις and ζήλωσις in a formal way; it also emphatically frames ζήλωσις as a noun of process/action.[97] What is clear, is that the two notions of μίμησις and ζήλωσις represent two connected stages of the same process of imitation.[98] Once a formal distinction between the two is made, Longinus refuses to keep mentioning them separately, but confines himself to using the term ζήλωσις. However, as Russell already noticed, 'what he [i.e. Longinus, M.S.] […] says refers to the whole complex idea of 'μίμησις and ζήλωσις', not to ζήλωσις without its partner'. In fact, μίμησις and ζήλωσις are complementary and cannot be seen apart from each other.[99]

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[93] Porter (2016), 68 describes the status of imitation in Longinus as follows: '[…] imitation is not one of the sources listed in 8.1, nor does it constitute a belated correction to that list, comprising, as it were, source number six. On the contrary, imitation of sublimity is the *premise* of *On the Sublime*, as is the desire (or felt "need") to make oneself sublime'. For a thorough discussion of sublime μίμησις, see also Whitmarsh (2001), 57-71.

[94] Longin. *Subl*. 1.1.

[95] Porter (2016), 68.

[96] On the notion of competition in Longinus, see De Jonge (2018).

[97] We may also interpret the suffix –σις as an allusion to authors such as Antiphon and Thucydides, who frequently used nouns with this morphology.

[98] This is also observed by Russell (1979), 10.

[99] In this respect, Russell (1979), 10 rightly draws a comparison with Horace, *AP* 410-11: *alterius sic altera poscit opem res et coniurat amice* ('so much they [i.e. *ars* and *natura*, M.S.] need each other's help and friendship'.

Longinus expounds the combative etymology of ζήλωσις by presenting an image of Plato, the representative of the genius who takes risks, and who is 'certainly the focus of attention in the discussion of μίμησις 13.2-14', as Russell observes.[100] In competing with Homer, Plato is, Longinus argues, 'like a young antagonist' (ὡς ἀνταγωνιστὴς νέος) fighting with 'one who had already won his spurs' (ἤδη τεθαυμασμένον).[101] In *On the Sublime* 14.1, the notion of ζήλωσις recurs, now combined with the Platonic image of the rapture of the imitator's soul:

> Προσπίπτοντα γὰρ ἡμῖν κατὰ ζῆλον ἐκεῖνα τὰ πρόσωπα καὶ οἷον διαπρέποντα τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνοίσει πως πρὸς τὰ ἀνειδωλοποιούμενα μέτρα […].

> For when in our emulation those great characters [i.e. Homer, Plato, Demosthenes, Thucydides, M.S.] come suddenly and as it were radiantly before our eyes, they will lead our souls to the ideal standards of perfection.

Thus, as in Dionysius, ζήλωσις is conceptualised in terms of mental activity and movement (ψυχὰς ἀνοίσει […] πρός), whereas the etymology of combat, which is omnipresent in Quintilian, is also exploited.[102] However, when Longinus introduces the complex of imitation and emulation (μίμησίς τε καὶ ζήλωσις, 13.2), the soul is not presented as moving towards models; instead, Longinus uses the image of the *influence* of models *upon* the soul. Just as divine vapour inspires the Pythian priestess after being inhaled by her, so it is with the stream of literature entering the souls of 'emulators' (τῶν ζηλούντων):

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[100] Russell (1981), 78.

[101] Longin. *Subl.* 13.4. Cf. Russell (1979), 11 who notices that for Longinus the most positive outcome of a battle with the literary masters of the Classical Greek Period is 'an honourable defeat'.

[102] Cf. esp. Dion. Hal. *Imit.* fr. III U-R = 2 Aujac = 2 Battisti. Although the idea of competition is present in Longinus, to make profit of a model does not mean that one should overpower it. As Longinus makes clear, 'even to be worsted by our forerunners is not without glory' (καὶ τὸ ἡττᾶσθαι τῶν προγενεστέρων οὐκ ἄδοξον, *Subl.* 13.4). As Innes (2002), 267-268 already noted, the idea of imitation as an upward motion of the soul is also aired in *Subl.* 13.3, in a quote of the famous passage of Plato's *Republic* 586a-b, where people are described who look downward to the ground like cattle, not upward to truth. Longinus subtly makes this quote serve and confirm his own idea of the sublime, thus giving his reader a *leçon par l'example* on imitation.

[…] οὕτως ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀρχαίων μεγαλοφυΐας εἰς τὰς τῶν ζηλούντων ἐκείνους ψυχὰς ὡς ἀπὸ ἱερῶν στομίων ἀπόρροιαί τινες φέρονται, ὑφ' ὧν ἐπιπνεόμενοι καὶ οἱ μὴ λίαν φοιβαστικοὶ τῷ ἑτέρων συνενθουσιῶσι μεγέθει.[103]

[…] so, too, from the natural genius of those old writers there flows into the hearts of their emulators as it were an emanation from those holy mouths. Inspired by this, even those who are not easily moved to prophecy share the enthusiasm of these others' grandeur.

Longinus shares the idea of influence of models upon the soul not only with Dionysius (cf. εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν μετοχετεύσῃ, *Imit*. 1.3), but also with Aelius Theon (cf. ὑπάγηται τῇ τῶν νέων ψυχῇ, *Progymn*. 70.31) and Seneca (cf. *ibunt* [i.e. *alimenta*, M.S.] *in ingenium*, *Ep*. 84.7).

The language of the overpowering force of the sublime – let alone the many other striking metaphors of mental rapture, ecstasy and enchantment – may give the impression that for Longinus, the idea of 'sublimity' rests on an understanding of imitation as a highly irrational and emotional activity (emotion is in fact the second of the five distinguished sources of the sublime).[104] But does this emotion in Longinus' conception of imitation outweigh thought?[105]

Giving an affirmative answer would be to dismiss the essence of Longinus' treatise. We should not think of sublimity as 'an indomitable force that cannot be governed by the rules of art', as Porter rightly observes.[106] This rejected conclusion for a large part depends on a misinterpretation of some passages of *On the Sublime*, in which nature is glorified. In 8.1, for instance, Longinus argues that of the five sources of the sublime as discussed above, the first two ('the power of grand conceptions' and 'the inspiration of vehement emotion') are 'for the most part congenital', and that the first source – preponderantly resulting from natural

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[103] Longin. *Subl*. 13.2.

[104] This second source of the sublime, emotion, is omitted by Caecilius, as we learn from Longin. *Subl*. 8.2.

[105] This is a central question in the discussion of emotion ('ecstasy') and thought ('truth') in Longinus by Halliwell (2011), 331. In his book *Between Ecstasy and Truth*, Halliwell dedicates a chapter to the role of ecstasy (i.e. an irrational, non-cognitive state of mind) and truth (i.e. cognition) in Longinus' *On the Sublime*, arguing that both ecstasy and truth are essential to Longinus' ideas on sublimity. Halliwell's discussion touches upon what Innes (2002), 273 calls 'key ideas throughout his [i.e. Longinus', M.S.] treatise, […] an over-arching division between nature and art […]'. For the concept of ecstasy in Longinus, see also De Jonge in J. Grethlein e.a. (ed.) (forthc.).

[106] Porter (2016), 63.

abilities, as we have just learned – is the most important of all five. In like manner, Longinus assures his addressee that 'in all production she [i.e. nature, M.S.] is the first and primary element' (αὕτη μὲν πρῶτόν τι καὶ ἀρχέτυπον γενέσεως στοιχεῖον ἐπὶ πάντων ὑφέστηκεν, 2.2).

We should, however, not forget Longinus' marked statement that genius needs 'the curb as often as the spur' (ὡς κέντρου πολλάκις, οὕτω δὲ καὶ χαλινοῦ, *ibid*.). The insistence on technique in achieving sublimity is also reflected in the frequent use of terms pertaining to training: a 'system' (μέθοδος) guarantees 'the safest practice and use' (ἀπλανεστάτην ἄσκησίν τε καὶ χρῆσιν, *ibid*.). And what is more: imitation itself is called an additional 'method' (ὁδός) that leads to the sublime.[107] Even the judgement of true sublimity is presented by Longinus as depending on rational, 'repeated contemplation' (ἀναθεώρησις) by the readership.[108] Thus, within the process of imitation, rationality is certainly not dismissed by Longinus; we should rather be inclined to suppose a 'cognitivist model of the sublime, a model in which thought and emotion […] work in close harness', as Halliwell argues.[109] Rationality is an indispensable element of true genius and, as such, lies at the heart of Longinus' treatise.[110] It is, however, not so easily recognizable: the sublime, with its overwhelming power, obscures (and indeed should obscure) what belongs to the realm of technique:

> Οὐκοῦν καὶ τῶν λόγων τὰ πάθη καὶ τὰ ὕψη, ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν ἐγγυτέρω κείμενα, διά τε φυσικήν τινα συγγένειαν καὶ διὰ λαμπρότητα ἀεὶ τῶν σχημάτων προεμφανίζεται καὶ τὴν τέχνην αὐτῶν ἀποσκιάζει καὶ οἷον ἐν κατακαλύψει τηρεῖ.[111]

> What is sublime and moving lies nearer to our hearts, and thus, partly from a natural affinity, partly from brilliance of effect, it always strikes the eye long before the figures, thus throwing their art into the shade and keeping it hidden as it were under a bushel.

We can regard Longinus' own sublime and elaborate style as a preeminent *leçon par l'example* on how to cover artistic skill with sublimity. For instance, he proficiently alludes to

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[107] Longin. *Subl*. 13.2.

[108] Longin. *Subl*. 7.3.

[109] Halliwell (2011), 337. Innes (2002), 273 speaks of a 'partnership'.

[110] Cf. Russell (1964), 113, who argues that 'imitation implies a deliberate effort and persistent vigilance that only art can sustain'.

[111] Longin. *Subl*. 17.3.

Plato in presenting imitation as a magnetic chain of divine inspiration which moves to us from the genius of old writers as from the earthly chasm to the Pythia in Delphi.[112] The key texts here are Plato's *Ion,* in which inspiration is said to trickle down from Muse to poet to rhapsode to audience, but also his *Phaedrus*, in which the prophetic 'madness' (μανία) of the Pythia is paralleled with the madness of inspired poets and lovers.[113] Both sublime passages from Plato are inventively brought together in a new, sublime passage which serves a completely different purpose: 'to evoke the creative power of μίμησις', as Innes puts it.[114] Thus, like Dionysius, who brings his theory of imitation into practice by presenting two Platonic-inspired stories as introduction to the second book of *On Imitation*, Longinus illustrates what he had argued before on the composition of sublime texts through artful, eclectic imitation:[115]

> […] ἐξ ἀνάγκης γένοιτ' ἂν ἡμῖν ὕψους αἴτιον τὸ τῶν ἐμφερομένων ἐκλέγειν ἀεὶ τὰ καιριώτατα καὶ ταῦτα τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα ἐπισυνθέσει καθάπερ ἕν τι σῶμα ποιεῖν δύνασθαι […].[116]

> […] it follows of necessity that we shall find one factor of sublimity in a consistently happy choice of these constituent elements, and in the power of combining them together as it were into one body.

What the imitator should select, are 'the most striking and intense' (τὰ ἄκρα […] καὶ ὑπερτεταμένα) of the expressions of his model.[117] To Longinus, true sublimity lies in 'the

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[112] Longin. *Subl*. 13.2. For this allusion, see also Innes (2002), 268. The status of Plato in *On the Sublime* is exceptional; he is a pre-eminent model of the 'flawed genius with his strengths and weaknesses', which is 'at the very heart of Longinus' concept of the sublime', according to Innes (2002), 261. On the chain of imitation in Longinus, see esp. Flashar (1979), 90-91, who articulates the implications of this chain as follows: 'der Schnitt liegt jetzt nicht mehr so sehr zwischen den kanonischen Vorbildern unter den alten Autoren auf der einen Seite, sondern zwischen allen vorbildlichen, nachgeahmten und nachahmenden, insgesamt also 'kanonischen' Autoren und Rednern der Vergangenheit und Gegenwart gegenüber einer Zukunft als Rezeptionsinstanz' (*ibid*., 91).

[113] Plato, *Ion* 533d; *Ph*. 244a-245c; 265a-b.

[114] Innes (2002), 268 also points to other allusions to Plato in Longinus, for instance in the last chapter (44) of *On the Sublime*, which is a dialogue with a philosopher.

[115] For a discussion of these stories in Dionysius, see section 1.1-3.

[116] Longin. *Subl*. 10.1.

[117] *Ibid*. These words refer to Sappho's skilful description of all kinds of emotion. Cf. also Longin. *Subl*. 10.3: ἡ λῆψις δ' ὡς ἔφην τῶν ἄκρων καὶ ἡ εἰς ταὐτὸ συναίρεσις ἀπειργάσατο τὴν ἐξοχήν ('the skill with which she [i.e.

choice of right and lofty words' (ἡ τῶν κυρίων καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶν ὀνομάτων ἐκλογή) that grants our style 'grandeur' (μέγεθος), 'beauty' (κάλλος), 'old-world charm' (εὐπίνειαν), 'weight' (βάρος), 'force' (ἰσχύν), 'strength' (κράτος) and a 'sort of lustre, like the bloom on the surface of the most beautiful bronzes' (γάνωσίν τινα τοῖς λόγοις ὥσπερ ἀγάλμασι καλλίστοις δι' αὐτῆς ἐπανθεῖν παρασκευάζουσα).[118] Such virtues of style should in a veiled way contribute to sublimity.

In a passage on splendid examples of hyperbaton which deserve imitation, Longinus approaches the idea of 'hidden artfulness' from a different angle. We learn that artfulness is not only veiled by true sublimity – it should also veil itself by giving the impression of being 'natural'. Longinus remarks: 'art is only perfect when it looks like nature and nature succeeds only when she conceals latent art' (ἡ τέχνη τέλειος, ἡνίκ' ἂν φύσις εἶναι δοκῇ, ἡ δ' αὖ φύσις ἐπιτυχής, ὅταν λανθάνουσαν περιέχῃ τὴν τέχνην).[119] We should note that in this passage, τέχνη (which means *hyperbaton* here) imitates human 'nature' (φύσις) and emotions. Thus, the contemplation of exemplary technical passages exhibiting *hyperbata* provides a window into human nature, and displays how manifestations of it should ideally be imitated by linguistic means.[120] Seen in this way, 'rhetorische Mimesis ist also zugleich […] traditionelle Mimesis zweiten Grades', as Woldemar Görler has observed.[121]

Dionysius provides an important impulse to this incorporation of the traditional kind of μίμησις (i.e. representation of (manifestions of) reality and human behaviour) within the concept of rhetorical (i.e. intertextual) μίμησις. He insists on natural (that means: approaching normal speech, realistic) style, syntax, word order and choice of words, but also on the trueful linguistic representation of the events and emotions described – that is, on a close

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Sappho, M.S.] takes up the most striking and combines them into a single whole'); Longin. *Subl.* 10.7: ἀλλὰ τὰς ἐξοχὰς ὡς <ἂν> εἴποι τις ἀριστίνδην ἐκκαθήραντες ἐπισυνέθηκαν, οὐδὲν φλοιῶδες ἢ ἄσεμνον ἢ σχολικὸν ἐγκατατάττοντες διὰ μέσου ('what they [i.e. Sappho, Aratus, Archilochus and Demosthenes, M.S.] have done is to clean up, as it were, the very best of the main points, and to fit them together, allowing nothing affected or undignified or pedantic to intervene').

[118] Longin. *Subl.* 30.1.

[119] Longin. *Subl.* 22.1. This reminds us of Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 8.6, where the seeming artlessness of Lysias' style is said to be the product of art.

[120] Cf. Flashar (1979), 93: 'der angehende Rhetor kann an den vorbildlichen Autoren anhand deren Verwendung des Hyperbaton studieren, wie diese die Auspragungen menschlicher Natur in der Leidenschaft mimetisch dargestellt haben, um ihrerseits auf dem Wege der imitatio der Autoren das gleiche leisten zu konnen'.

[121] See a written report of the discussion after an exposé of Hellmut Flashar on μίμησις in Flashar (1979), 99.

correspondence between linguistic art and reality.[122] We could say that in Dionysius, and even more in Longinus, manifestations of nature are recommended to be imitated through the filter of the artful writings of Greek literary masters from the Classical Period.[123]

Longinus' insistence on the imitation of beauty and sublimity in the works of classical Greek authors closely links him to Dionysius and Aelius Theon (and Pliny as well, who will be discussed next). Moreover, his eagerness to describe the process of imitation in Platonic-coloured terms of mental activity in a remarkable way corresponds to what we read in Dionysius, Aelius Theon, and Seneca, which suggests that these authors made use of (elements of) a shared discourse. However, more than any of these writers, Longinus emphasises the role of divine ecstasy and inspiration within the process of imitation.

5.5 PLINY THE YOUNGER'S *LETTERS*

So far, we have seen that imitation theories occur in a range of literary genres and contexts. Pliny the Younger (61/62-113 AD) devotes attention to the subject of imitation in several of his private letters. Nine books of letters survive, containing 247 epistles in sum. This massive amount of letters testifies to Pliny's wide circle of both Greek and Roman friends, acquaintances and colleagues. Among his addressees are the emperor Trajan and his close friend Tacitus, the historian, but also people who are not well-known to us.

The order of Pliny's nine books of letters is chronological, but the order of the letters within these books is not. It has been suggested that his *Letters* were written between 96 and 109.[124] Each book contains epistles which display a variety of different styles – from poetic to colloquial – and they may discuss completely different topics, such as law, politics, natural phenomena, domestic news and literary criticism.

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[122] The idea of 'naturalness' of style is omnipresent in Dionysius' works. For a thorough discussion of this, see De Jonge (2008), 251 ff. An example of Dionysius' preference for linguistic features representing the events described is his discussion of Homer's description of the labour of Sisyphus (*Comp.* 20.12). Dionysius praises Homer for his skill in representing Sisyphus' perseverance in the very way he composes his sentences: ἐνταῦθα ἡ σύνθεσίς ἐστιν ἡ δηλοῦσα τῶν γινομένων ἕκαστον ('here it is the composition that illustrates each of the details'). Cf. also *Pomp.* 4.3, where Xenophon is praised for his natural choice of words: ἐκλέγει δὲ ὀνόματα συνήθη τε καὶ προσφυῆ τοῖς πράγμασι ('the words he chooses are familiar and correspond to the nature of the subject').

[123] Cf. Flashar (1979), 100: 'die Verbindung der beiden Arten von Mimesis [i.e. philosophical and rhetorical imitation, M.S.] wird ja bei Dionys nicht wirklich durchgefuhrt'.

[124] On the date of Pliny's *Letters*, see e.g. Whitton (2013), §3.

In this latter field, Pliny displays a conspicuous enthusiasm for oratory, and especially for the orators Cicero and Demosthenes – the two champions of Latin and Greek rhetoric who are paired in a σύγκρισις by Longinus and Quintilian.[125] Some of his letters show that Pliny is very much concerned with the imitation of Cicero and Demosthenes; others express his insistence on sublimity and expansiveness of style, which seems to be tributary to the views of Dionysius and especially Longinus. Pliny's philhellenism is remarkable, and 55 letters with Greek references to 37 different recipients bear witness to this enthusiasm.[126]

Like Dionysius and Longinus, who distinguish between μίμησις and ζῆλος/ζήλωσις, Pliny distinguishes between *imitatio* and *aemulatio*. He uses both *imitari* (or *adsequi*) and *aemulari*, and often casually switches between the terms. *Letter* 1.5, addressed to Voconius Romanus, illustrates this alternating use of the terms *imitatio* and *aemulatio* best:

> *"Est enim" inquam "mihi cum Cicerone aemulatio, nec sum contentus eloquentia saeculi nostri; nam stultissimum credo ad imitandum non optima quaeque proponere.*[127]

> "Personally I do try to emulate Cicero," I said, "and I am not satisfied with the oratory of today. It seems to me most foolish not to imitate the highest standards."

Since *aemulatio* and *imitatio* are mentioned in the same breath, we may at first sight be inclined to think that the notions are used without a clear difference. It is, however, significant that the concept of *imitatio* is used in general, unspecific terms, whereas *aemulatio* defines Pliny's specific stance towards a concrete and close model, namely Cicero, with whom Pliny competes not only in his literary achievements, but also in his political career:

> *Te quidem, ut scribis, ob hoc maxime delectat auguratus meus, quod M. Tullius augur fuit. Laetaris enim quod honoribus eius insistam, quem aemulari in studiis cupio.*[128]

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[125] Pliny also names Aeschines, Lysias and Isocrates. For Pliny on Demosthenes, see e.g. *Ep.* 1.2.2; 6.33.11; 7.30. For Cicero as a literary model or patron for Pliny, see e.g. *Ep.* 1.20.4-10; 3.15.1; 5.3.5; 7.4.3.6; 7.17.13.

[126] For references to Greek language in Pliny, see Deane (1918a); *ibid.* (1918b) for references to Greek literature. For Pliny's philhellenism, see Rees (2014), 109 ff.

[127] Plin. *Ep.* 1.5.13.

[128] Plin. *Ep.* 4.8.4.

And you, as you say in your letter, are particularly pleased to see me an augur because Cicero held the same priesthood, for you are glad that I am stepping into his offices as I am so anxious to emulate him [i.e. Cicero, M.S.] in my literary work.

Marchesi observes that the term *aemulatio* used by Pliny to sketch his approach to Cicero is quite 'loaded', as it stands in opposition to the more common term *imitatio*.[129]

This latter term is not only used in unspecific contexts, as we have just seen in the quoted passage from *Letter* 1.5; it is also the appropriate qualification of Pliny's imitative approach of the works of a more distant, Greek model, Demosthenes, and of the highly esteemed Calvus, whose literary force Pliny wants to capture in his own speech. Whereas Quintilian emphatically argues that 'force' (*vehementia/vis*) in speech cannot be achieved through *imitatio*, but only through *aemulatio*, Pliny links 'force' (*vis*) with *imitatio* – probably because he is less concerned with sharp theoretical divisions:[130]

[...] *eo magis quod nihil ante peraeque eodem* ζήλῳ *scripsisse videor. Temptavi enim imitari Demosthenen semper tuum, Calvum nuper meum [...] nam vim tantorum virorum, 'pauci quos aequus ...' adsequi possunt.*[131]

[…] and the more so because I don't think I have written anything before with quite so much emulation. For I have tried to imitate Demosthenes, as you always do, and lately my favourite Calvus […] for the force of great men like these can only be followed by the favoured few.

We notice that Pliny in this passage from a letter to Maturus Arrianus easily switches from the Greek noun ζῆλος to *imitari* (in an explanatory *enim*-clause) to *adsequi*, apparently without supposing any difference between the terms. However, ζῆλος and *imitatio* cannot be understood as synonyms. What we should observe, is that *imitari* and *adsequi* involve a tempering of Pliny's (unrealistically) high aspiration (ζῆλος).[132] This aspiration (note the verb

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[129] Marchesi (2008), 227.

[130] For Quintilian's ideas on force and imitation, see section 2.3.1.

[131] Plin. *Ep*. 1.2.

[132] Sherwin-White (1966), 89 argues that Pliny 'hints at a new turn of style by using the word ζῆλος, which means more than *sollicitudo* in a similar context, 2.5.2'. I agree that ζῆλος is quite a pregnant term, but I don't know what Sherwin-White means by 'a new turn of style'.

temptari) is the ultimate force that stirs an author to compete with his models.[133] Imitative trial and error (cf. *temptavi [...] imitari*), however, make him level-headed and fill him with a kind of diffidence and modesty – connotations which, at least in this passage, adhere to Pliny's understanding of *imitatio*.

This sense of modesty as a connotation of *imitatio* is also apparent from a letter addressed to Julius Genitor, in which Pliny discusses his model Demosthenes again:[134]

> *[...] sed cum lego, ex comparatione sentio quam male scribam, licet tu mihi bonum animum facias, qui libellos meos de ultione Helvidi orationi Demosthenis κατὰ Μειδίου confers. Quam sane, cum componerem illos, habui in manibus, non ut aemularer (improbum enim ac paene furiosum), sed tamen imitarer et sequerer [...].*[135]

> […] though comparison with my reading only makes me realise how badly I write, however much you encourage me by comparing my speech in vindication of Helvidius with Demosthenes' speech against Meidias. I admit that I had this by me while I was writing my own speech, not with any idea of emulating it – for this would be impudent and mad – but imitating and following it […].

From this passage we can conclude that *aemulatio* runs the risk of degenerating into something insane (cf. *furiosum*) when one's talents fall short.[136] Although Dionysius, other

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[133] In several of his letters, Pliny refers to people driven by ζῆλος. In *Ep*. 7.12.2, he calls his addressee Minicius Fundanus and companions εὔζηλοι (people who advocate Atticism in oratory) – thus implying that there are also people who have a bad sense of ζῆλος (οἱ κακόζηλοι, those traditionally associated with Asianism in oratory). Pliny reproaches οἱ εὔζηλοι with being extreme and excessively critical: they cut out the best passages (cf. *optima quaeque detrahitis*, 7.12.3) and adopt a narrow view on what good literature is. Cf. e.g. also Quint. 12.10.21. On κακόζηλοι/*cacozelon*, see e.g. also Longin. *Subl*. 3.4; Quint. 8.3.56-58.

[134] Cf. Plin. *Ep*. 1.2 above.

[135] Plin. *Ep*. 7.30.4-5.

[136] It is difficult to distinguish the precise roles played by *ars* and *natura/ingenium* in Pliny's conception of imitation. As I see it, *aemulatio* merely points to an emotional and competitive incentive for attaining the high artistic level of particular models, whereas *imitatio* is the more neutral term, from which the idea of zeal is absent. Pliny's focus seems to be on *natura*, for he argues that facing 'the difference between talents of a great and small man' (*diversitas ingeniorum maximi et minimi*) is one of the factors which should prevent the imitator from being too zealous (*Ep*. 7.30.5). A similarly humble stance towards his own small talent and the great *ingenium* of Cicero (whom he nevertheless wants to emulate) can be found in *Ep*. 9.2.2-3: *illi enim et copiosissimum ingenium, et par ingenio qua varietas rerum qua magnitudo largissime suppetebat; nos quam*

than Pliny, warns against ζῆλος resulting from jealousy or bad literary taste (as we have seen in section 2.2.5), we can observe a clear parallel between Dionysius' and Pliny's caution with regard to ζῆλος/*aemulatio*.[137] What appears from the passage above is that for Pliny, *aemulatio* is out of place especially when revered, but more distant authors like Demosthenes stand model; when a highly esteemed, but closer model like Cicero is the object of imitation, Pliny is more ready to use *aemulatio* as the proper term, as we have already seen.[138]

For Pliny, as for the Greek and Roman critics discussed above, a careful selection from different literary models is crucial in the process of imitation. This is apparent from *Letter* 7.9, which is a very valuable source for Pliny's ideas on imitation. In this letter, which is entirely devoted to the importance of writing in the process of imitation, Pliny refuses to prescribe in an explicit way what authors should be read, presuming that this is quite obvious to his addressee Fuscus Salinator:

> *Non enim dixi quae legenda arbitrarer: quamquam dixi, cum dicerem quae scribenda. Tu memineris sui cuiusque generis auctores diligenter eligere. Aiunt enim multum legendum esse, non multa.*[139]

> I have said nothing about what I think you should read, though this was implied when I was telling you what to write. Remember to make a careful selection from representative authors in each subject, for the saying is that a man should be deeply, not widely, read.

Pliny's aphorism that 'man should be deeply, not widely read' (*multum legendum esse, non multa*) is a playful reference to a *sententia* of Quintilian, who states that 'we should form our minds and take our tone from extensive reading, rather than from reading many authors' (*multa magis quam multorum lectione formanda mens et ducendus color*).[140] This reference

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angustis terminis claudamur etiam tacente me perspicis ('he [i.e. Cicero, M.S.] was not only richly gifted but was supplied with a wealth of varied and important topics to suit his abilities, though you [i.e. the addressee, Statius Sabinus, M.S.] know without my telling you the narrow limits confining me').

[137] For Dionysius' ideas on ζῆλος, see esp. section 2.2.5.

[138] For Pliny's relationship with Cicero and other instances of references to Cicero in Pliny's *Letters*, see Marchesi (2008), 226 ff.

[139] Plin. *Ep*. 7.9.15.

[140] Cf. Quint. 10.1.59. On references to Quintilian in this letter, see Sherwin-White (1966), 412-413.

may well explain why Pliny does not offer his addressee a list of recommended readings: Quintilian's extensive reading list in 10.1 is the text to which he wants to refer Fuscus.

Pliny's version of this *sententia* of Quintilian displays, as Whitton points out, 'all the hallmarks of imitation'.[141] It is very much like the model, for instance in the repetition of the antithetical polyptoton: *multa – multorum* (Quintilian) versus *multum – multa* (Pliny). But clearly, there are also conspicuous differences, such as the variation of substantive and gerund: *lectione* (Quintilian) and *legendum* (Pliny).[142] Thus, Pliny originally reworks the passage of his revered teacher Quintilian, and brings into practice what he preaches in the same letter:

> *[...] imitatione optimorum similia inveniendi facultas paratur.*[143]

> [...] imitation of the best models leads to the aptitude for inventing similar things.

According to Pliny, translating Greek into Latin and vice versa nourishes this sense for 'invention', since it cultivates 'perception and critical sense' (*intellegentia [...] et iudicium*), the latter being a key concept in the reading list of Quintilian.[144] Only when this perception and critical sense is obtained, is the imitator allowed to compete with his model, at the risk of being inferior in every aspect:

> *Nihil offuerit quae legeris hactenus, ut rem argumentumque teneas, quasi aemulum scribere lectisque conferre, ac sedulo pensitare, quid tu, quid ille commodius. Magna gratulatio si non nulla tu, magnus pudor si cuncta ille melius.*[145]

> When you have read a passage sufficiently to remember the subject-matter and line of thought, there is no harm in your trying to emulate it; then compare your efforts with the original and consider carefully where your version is better or worse. You may well congratulate yourself if yours is sometimes better and feel much ashamed if the other is always superior to yours.

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[141] See Whitton (forthc.). According to Whitton, this whole letter of Pliny is 'bursting with references to *Inst.* 10'.

[142] For a more profound discussion of the parallels and differences in this passage, see Whitton (forthc.).

[143] Plin. *Ep.* 7.9.2.

[144] *Ibid.* For the concept of *iudicium* in Quintilian, see esp. section 4.3.

[145] Plin. *Ep.* 7.9.3.

Here, as in Longinus, we see that the danger and risk of failure is inherent to *aemulatio*.[146] Hence, Pliny prefers a 'private attempt' (*secreta contentio,* 7.9.4) – which is opposite to Longinus' idea of publicly taking risks to become successful. When someone confidently contends with his model, having the intention to follow it rather than conquer it, his reward may even be to win, according to Pliny:

> *[...] quamquam multos videmus eius modi certamina sibi cum multa laude sumpsisse, quosque subsequi satis habebant, dum non desperant, antececisse.*[147]

> [...] and yet we see many people entering this type of contest with much praise and, by not lacking confidence, outstripping the authors whom they intended only to follow.

Thus, the victory over a splendid model is often the unintentional result of modest confidence during the process of imitation.

But what literary virtues should be imitated according to Pliny? Like Dionysius and Longinus, Pliny strongly favours aesthetic qualities. In a letter addressed to Cornelius Tacitus, Pliny complains about a man of learning who prefers nothing in forensic oratory so much as 'brevity' (*brevitas*), and who makes Lysias, the brothers Gracchus and Cato his authorities.[148] Although Pliny admits that well-dosed conciseness should be 'observed' (*custodiendam*), he retorts that 'most points gain weight and emphasis by a fuller treatment' (*plerisque longiore tractatu vis quaedam et pondus accedit*).[149] According to Pliny, this is demonstrated by the speeches of Demosthenes, Aeschines, Hyperides, Pollio, Caesar, Caelius, and Cicero.[150]

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[146] The idea of the inevitability of risk is also present in Dionysius. In *Pomp*. 2.4, Dionysius writes that he criticised Plato earlier (*Dem*. 5-7), but that he agrees with Pompeius that great success necessarily involves a risk of failure: [...] ἐν δὲ τοῦτο διισχυρίζομαι ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι μεγάλως ἐπιτυχεῖν οὐδενὶ τρόπῳ μὴ τοιαῦτα τολμῶντα καὶ παραβαλλόμενον, ἐν οἷς καὶ σφάλλεσθαι ἐστὶν ἀναγκαῖον ('but this one point I strongly affirm, that it is not possible to achieve great success in any direction without facing and accepting risks of such a kind as must involve the possibility of failure').

[147] Plin. *Ep*. 7.9.4.

[148] Plin. *Ep*. 1.20.19.

[149] Plin. *Ep*. 1.20.4.

[150] *Ibid*.

In words which are strongly reminiscent of the metaphors of thunder and lightning used by Longinus, Pliny pleads for literary sublimity, such as is displayed by Pericles, rather than a 'curtailed and restricted speech' (*amputata oratio et abscisa*):[151]

> *[…] lata et magnifica et excelsa* [*oratio,* M.S.] *tonat fulgurat, omnia denique perturbat ac miscet*.[152]

> [It is, M.S.] a grand speech, spacious and sublime, which can thunder, lighten, and throw a world into tumult and confusion.

Like Longinus, Pliny seems to conceive of the sublime as a sudden and highly interactive phenomenon, which can be compared with grandiose weather events like thunder and lightning. At the end of the same letter, Pliny expresses his preference for an expansive, 'snowy' speech, thus alluding to Homer's description of the words of Odysseus which flutter down like snowflakes:[153]

> *[…] si tamen detur electio, illam orationem similem nivibus hibernis, id est crebram et adsiduam sed et largam, postremo divinam et caelestem volo*.[154]

> But, if I were given my choice, I prefer the speech like the winter snows, one which is fluent and vigorous, but also expansive, which is in fact divinely inspired […].

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[151] Plin. *Ep*. 1.20.19.

[152] *Ibid*.

[153] Pliny's insistence on beauty, sublimity and expansiveness implies a tight integration of poetic virtues of style within the domain of rhetoric. This he makes explicit in the letter to Fuscus Salinator (7.9.8-9), which says that 'often even in a speech the subject calls for a narrative or even a poetic style of description' (*saepe in oratione quoque non historica modo sed prope poetica descriptionum necessitas incidit*). In this letter, Pliny recommends to his addressee to take notice of different literary genres. For instance, historical narratives enhance a sense for poetic description, while writing letters promotes the qualities of 'brevity and simplicity of style' (*pressus sermo purusque*).

[154] Plin. *Ep*. 1.20.22-23. Cf. Hom. *Il*. 3.221-223: ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ὄπα τε μεγάλην ἐκ στήθεος εἴη καὶ ἔπεα νιφάδεσσιν ἐοικότα χειμερίῃσιν, οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆϊ γ' ἐρίσσειε βροτὸς ἄλλος ('but when from his chest he sent out a sonorous sound and words which were like hibernal snowflakes, no other mortal man could be on par with Odysseus') (tr. Schippers). Elsewhere in the *Iliad*, the metaphor of snowflakes is used to describe 'density', either of a hail of stones falling down (*Il*. 12.156, 278) or of an advancing army (*Il*. 19.357).

Pliny's disapproval of the 'curtailed and restricted speech' (*amputata oratio et abscisa*) as opposed to a speech which is 'grand and spacious' (*lata et magnifica*), may well bring back to mind Quintilian's rejection of Seneca's style. Quintilian disapprovingly defines Seneca's compositions as 'broken by all kinds of error' (*omnibus vitiis fractum*).[155] Although Quintilian does not focus on aesthetic or sublime virtues as overtly as Dionysius, Aelius Theon, Longinus and Pliny do, he dislikes the pointed, truncated and sensationalist style that had emerged and gained ground in the first century AD. If carried through too far, *brevitas* apparently degenerates into an undesirably fragmentary style. As is testified by Quintilian's extensive recommendations of Greek and Latin poets, it is his opinion that poetic features should balance this exorbitant fondness of brevity, and Pliny explicitly agrees with his teacher.

It is striking that Pliny not only shares with Longinus the preference for and conceptualisation of a grand and spacious effect of speech; like Longinus, he also regards risk of failure (already mentioned above) as an inherent element of aspiration to elevation and sublimity, as is clear from his *Letter* 9.26:

> *Debet enim orator erigi attolli, interdum etiam effervescere ecferri, ac saepe accedere ad praeceps; nam plerumque altis et excelsis adiacent abrupta. Tutius per plana sed humilius et depressius iter [...].*[156]

> The orator ought in fact to be roused and heated, sometimes even to boiling-point, and to let his feelings carry him on till he treads the edge of a precipice; for a path along the heights and peaks often skirts the sheer drop below. It may be safer to keep to the plain, but the road lies too low to be interesting.

According to Pliny, it is precisely this risk which commands the respect of the audience:

> *Nam ut quasdam artes ita eloquentiam nihil magis quam ancipitia commendant.[...] Sunt enim maxime mirabilia quae maxime insperata, maxime periculosa utque Graeci magis exprimunt, παράβολα.*[157]

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[155] Quint. 10.1.125. According to Quintilian, 'brokenness' is not only noticeable in Seneca's style, but also in the way he presents his ideas. See 10.1.130: *si rerum pondera minutissimis sententiis non fregisset* ('if he had not broken up his weighty ideas in his tiny little epigrams').

[156] Plin. *Ep*. 9.26.2.

[157] Plin. *Ep*. 9.26.3-4.

> Eloquence is in fact one of the skills which gain most from the risks they run. […] for it is the most unexpected and dangerous feats which win most admiration: ventures which the Greeks can define so well in a single word, παράβολα.

In sum, Pliny can be said to unite different, already existing ideas on imitation into a coherent mimetic framework that fits first-century literary production in a Graeco-Roman world: the classicising reverence for Greek oratory in general and Demosthenes in particular, whose genius, as he thinks, is too great to be emulated; the emphasis on originality and reworking of the models at one's disposal; the understanding of *aemulatio* as the competitive, but modest aspiration to surpass those masterpieces (especially Cicero's) which one's *intellegentia* and *ingenium* can grasp thoroughly; and, last but not least, the need for literary sublimity and expansiveness which urge the author to take risks in order to overwhelm his audience.

5.6 TACITUS' *DIALOGUE ON ORATORY*

Publius Cornelius Tacitus, a close friend of Pliny's as well as one of his addressees, was born about 56 AD and probably died around 120 AD.[158] He completed his training as an orator in 75 under Marcus Aper and Julius Secundus, both of whom figure in his *Dialogue on Oratory*. Tacitus, a *homo novus*, advanced far in the politics of Rome under the reign of Domitian, Nerva and Trajan. The crowning glory of his political career was the governorship of the Roman province of Asia in Western Anatolia in 112-113 AD.

Tacitus' eloquence was exceptional. Pliny also testifies to this (*Ep*. 2.11.17). In 100 AD, Tacitus and Pliny took legal action against Marius Priscus, governor of Africa, who had extorted his province ruthlessly. They won the case and Priscus was sentenced, but hardly punished. From this time on, Tacitus did not appear as an orator anymore; instead, he devoted himself to composing his *Dialogue on Oratory* (precise date unknown) and two historiographical works: the *Histories* (105 AD, finished in 109 AD) and finally his *Annals* (probably published about 120 AD).[159]

The *Dialogue on Oratory* is never mentioned in ancient sources known to us, nor does the work reveal its author. It was found in the fifteenth century as part of a manuscript which contained other works of Tacitus. However, attribution of the *Dialogue* to Tacitus was

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[158] The following information is based on Mayer (2001) and Gerbrandy (2010).

[159] Before he stopped working as an advocate, Tacitus had written the *Agricola* (98 AD) and an ethnographic treatise on the Teutons.

problematic, not only because his other works are all concerned with historiography, but also because the fluent style of the *Dialogue* is closer to Cicero's.[160] Hence, the work has long been attributed to Quintilian and Pliny, but unfairly so. The fact that the style of the *Dialogue* deviates from that of Tacitus' historiographical works, may well be explained by the difference in genre. There is, however, another important reason to assume that Tacitus had indeed been the author.

In 1832, Lange discovered an undisputable argument for Tacitus as the author of the *Dialogue*. In one of his letters to his friend Tacitus (written in about 107 AD), Pliny contrasts his own laborious writings with the poems 'which you think are finished most easily in the woods and groves' (*quae tu inter nemora et lucos commodissime perfici putas*), thus alluding to the words of Aper in the *Dialogue,* who states that poets have to withdraw 'into the woods and groves' (*in nemora et lucos*) to be able to finish their work.[161] With this reference in a letter of Pliny, we have a *terminus ante quem* for the *Dialogue* (107 AD). We can also be rather sure about its *terminus post quem*: the death of Domitian in 96 AD, which allowed the interlocutors to discuss freedom of speech openly.

Tacitus' *Dialogue* is the representation of an amicable conversation during the sixth year of the reign of Verspasian (75 AD). Tacitus himself joined the conversation, but, like Plato in the *Symposium* and Cicero in *On the Orator*, keeps completely in the background. The most prominent of all four participants in the discussion are Marcus Aper, who fervently defends – perhaps as an *advocatus diaboli* – modern rhetoric as opposed to 'old' poetry, as well as Curiatius Maternus – according to Aper a gifted rhetorician, who decided to dedicate himself to poetry. In the *Dialogue,* a tripartite structure may be discerned. The first part (5-13) reflects the confrontation between Aper and Maternus, who discuss the complex relation between poetry and prose; the second part (16-26) represents the discussion between Aper and Messala about the supposed qualitative differences between the rhetoric of the past and the present; in the last part, different explanations for the decline of rhetoric are offered.[162]

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[160] That Cicero is an unlikely candidate for author, is convincingly demonstrated by e.g. Mayer (2001), 27-31.

[161] Plin. *Ep*. 9.10.2; Tac. *Dial*. *de Orat*. 9.6.

[162] Messalla explains the decline of rhetoric by pointing to indolence in raising and education; by contrast, Maternus suggests that the decline is caused by changes in the political situation. The interpretation of especially this last part of the *Dialogue* is far from unambiguous: for instance, is Maternus, who is urged to be prudent in expressing his ideas in his tragedy *Cato*, sincere in his statement that Vespasian restored the golden age, or are his words a form of *dissimulatio*?

Although the concept of imitation is, at first sight, not explicitly reflected upon in the *Dialogue*, much of what the participants discuss touches upon what imitation is and what the object of imitation should (not) be. The focus of the discussion is, of course, on Latin literature and practical rhetoric, although figureheads of Greek poetry, such as Homer, Euripides and Sophocles, are also mentioned and, just as in Quintilian's reading list, brought into close connection with Latin writers.[163] The same goes for the heterogeneous group of the Attic orators Demosthenes, Aeschines, Hyperides, Lysias and Lycurgus, which is brought in by Messalla as a parallel and justification for the pluriformity of the group of the Latin orators Cicero, Calvus, Asinius, Caesar, Caelius and Brutus – men who, as he argues, differ in character and age, but whose styles all share the characteristic of 'healthfulness' (*sanitas*) as opposed to the stylistic malady of the more distant past:

> *Sed quo modo inter Atticos oratores primae Demostheni tribuuntur, proximum autem locum Aeschines et Hyperides et Lysias et Lycurgus obtinent, omnium tamen concessu haec oratorum aetas maxime probatur, sic apud nos Cicero quidem ceteros eorundem temporum disertos antecessit, Calvus autem et Asinius et Caesar et Caelius et Brutus iure et prioribus et sequentibus anteponuntur. Nec refert quod inter se specie differunt, cum genere consentiant. [...] omnes [...] eandem sanitatem eloquentiae (prae se) ferunt, ut si omnium pariter libros in manum sumpseris scias, quamvis in diversis ingeniis, esse quandam iudicii ac voluntatis similitudinem et cognationem.*[164]

But just as in Attic oratory the palm is awarded to Demosthenes, while next in order come Aeschines, Hyperides, Lysias, and Lycurgus, and yet this era of eloquence is by universal consent considered as a whole the best; so with us it was Cicero who outdistanced the other speakers of his own day, while Calvus and Asinius and Caesar and Caelius and Brutus are rightly classed both above their predecessors and above those who came after them. In the face of this generic agreement it is unimportant that there are special points of difference. […] they all exhibit the same healthfulness of style, to such an extent that if you take up all their speeches at the same time you will find that, in spite of diversity of talent, there is a certain family likeness in taste and

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[163] Homer, Euripides and Sophocles are mentioned in Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 12.5, where Maternus argues that the reputation of these poets is comparable with that of magnificent prose writers. For the relationship between Tacitus' and Quintilian's stylistic ideas esp. in their estimation of Seneca, see Dominik (1997).

[164] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 25.3-4.

aspiration.

We should note that Greeks and Romans, despite a shared stylistic *sanitas,* are presented as different, competing parties (cf. *inter Atticos [...] apud nos*). In Quintilian too, the first plural *nos* as opposed to *illi* (the Greeks) frequently turns up in the reading list of Latin literature (10.1.85-131).[165]

Although the names of especially Latin authors are scattered throughout the *Dialogue,* there is no systematic treatment of what writers should be imitated. However, Aper ironically enough does establish a kind of 'anti-reading list' (22.1-23.4), containing those Latin authors who lack *sanitas* and belong to 'the same sick-bay' (*eodem valetudinario*) of the literature from the distant, coarse past, that approves only of 'the familiar skin and bones' (*haec ossa et hanc maciem*) of style from which modern orators should keep far away.[166]

The participants in the *Dialogue* do not distinguish between *imitari* and *aemulari*; only the verb *imitari* occurs (twice).[167] In the first case, Aper applies the verb *imitari* to refer to the undesirable imitation by Calvus, Caelius and even Cicero of the rough ways of expression of authors from a distant past, such as Servius Galba and Gaius Carbo:

> *Haec ideo praedixi ut, si qua ex horum oratorum fama gloriaque laus temporibus adquiritur, eam docerem in medio sitam et propiorem nobis quam Servio Galbae aut C. Carboni quosque alios merito antiquos vocaverimus; sunt enim horridi et impoliti, et rudes et informes, et quos utinam nulla parte imitatus esset Calvus vester aut Caelius aut ipse Cicero.*[168]

The reason why I have said all this by way of introduction is that I wanted to show that we have a common property in any lustre the name and fame of these orators may shed upon the times, and that it is nearer to us than to Servius Galba, or Gaius Carbo, and all the rest who may properly be called 'ancients'; for they are really rough and unfinished, crude and inartistic, and generally with such qualities that one could wish

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[165] E.g. Quint. 10.1.85.

[166] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 21.1 ff. On *malignitas* as a term of aesthetic evaluation in e.g. Tacitus' *Dialogue,* see Van den Berg (2008).

[167] The noun *aemuli* (Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 34.5) occurs in the sense of 'antagonists'. In other works of Tacitus, the notion of *aemulatio* frequently occurs, but rarely in a context denoting literary emulation.

[168] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 18.1.

that neither your admired Calvus, nor Caelius, nor Cicero himself had imitated him in anything.

That in this passage the process of imitation is seen as an unfortunate mistake, is not implied by the verb *imitari* itself, which is a neutral term; it is the object of imitation (i.e. the rude literary works of the ancients) which invites the negative connotation. This follows from the other occurrence of the verb *imitari* in a passage in which Aper refers to the imitation of the best stylistic features of different writers from former days:

> *Vos vero, <viri> disertissimi, ut potestis, ut facitis, inlustrate saeculum nostrum pulcherrimo genere dicendi. Nam et te, Messalla, video laetissima quaeque antiquorum imitantem [...].*[169]

> Do you, my eloquent friends, continue – as you are able to do – to shed lustre on this age of ours by your brilliant way of speaking. You, Messalla, imitate, as I observe, all that is richest in the eloquence of former days […].

But what virtues does the 'richest eloquence of former days' comprise? In the *Dialogue*, the discussion of different styles is, especially in the first part of the discussion, presented along the lines of two polarisations: that between poetry and prose and between the past and the present. At the beginning of the *Dialogue*, there is a strong tension between a poetic style, defined by Maternus as 'eloquence in its higher and holier form' (*sanctiorem [...] et augustiorem eloquentiam*), and a rhetorical prose style which is, according to Maternus' opponent Aper, 'more productive of practical benefits' (*ad utilitatem fructiosus*).[170] Poetry, by contrast, is, according to Aper, not beneficial at all for the orator himself:

> *Nam carmina et versus, quibus totam vitam Maternus insumere optat [...], neque dignitatem ullam auctoribus suis conciliant neque utilitates alunt; voluptatem autem brevem, laudem inanem et infructuosam consequuntur.*[171]

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[169] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 23.5-6.

[170] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 5.4. In the *Dialogue*, the leading character Curiatius Maternus, who is a poet himself, is an advocate of the art of poetry; Marcus Aper, who defends modern rhetoric, is his main opponent. To Aper, the utility of rhetoric lies in the fact that all people take advantage from being protected by the eloquence of others. The notion of the utility of rhetoric is combined with the idea of the 'pleasure of rhetorical eloquence' (*voluptatem oratoriae eloquentiae*, 6.1), caused by the general attention and admiration for eloquent people.

[171] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 9.1.

As for poetry and verse-making, to which Maternus is eager to devote the whole of his life […], they neither bring their authors any respect nor do they feed their material welfare; and the satisfaction they furnish is short-lived, the fame empty and profitless.

Moreover, it is the crowd of rhetoricians which, in Aper's view, is committed to 'private and present-day controversies' (*privatas et nostri saeculi controversias*), while poets are considered asocial and concerned not only with the past, but also with subject matter that is irrelevant and none of their business.[172] This opposition between poetry and prose is remarkable. As we have seen, Dionysius, Aelius Theon and Longinus all tend to blur the boundaries between poetry and prose for the sake of eclectic imitation, which prospers from the benefits of both genres; especially in the first part of Tacitus' *Dialogue*, however, the connection between poetry and prose is the subject of a heated and polarizing debate.

As the conversation goes on, the opposition between a poetic and rhetorical style gives way to another contrast: that between the rhetoric of a 'gloomy and rough antiquity' (*tristem et impexam antiquitatem*) on the one hand and modern rhetoric on the other. Modern rhetoric is characterised by 'good-going proof, or piquant utterances, or brilliant and highly wrought pen-pictures' (*aut cursu argumentorum aut colore sententiarum aut nitore et cultu descriptionum*).[173] That Aper distances himself from the rhetoric of a 'gloomy and rough antiquity', however, does not mean that he despises Demosthenes, Hyperides, or Cicero. The space in time between them and the present is, as he argues, negligible; these orators are the ones 'whom the same persons [i.e. old men, M.S.] could have heard with their own ears' (*quos eorundum hominum aures agnoscere […] potuerunt*).[174]

By presenting venerable rhetoricians like Demosthenes, Hyperides and Cicero in close connection with the orators of the present, Aper paves the way for arguing that there is no such thing as a 'decline' of rhetoric. In fact, it turns out that the real opposition is not between 'past' and 'present', but between stylistic roughness and refinement – characteristics of style which are not bound to specific decades.[175] Modern rhetoric should overcome the tendency to

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[172] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 10.8. For the asociality of poets, cf. e.g. *Dial. de Orat.* 9.5-6; for their focus on the past, cf. e.g. *Dial. de Orat.* 3.4; for their tendency to deal with cases which are not of their concern, cf. e.g. *Dial. de Orat.* 10.6. Maternus himself is an excellent target for Aper's aversion of poets: the day before the dialogue took place, Maternus' tragedy *Cato* (now lost) was performed in public.

[173] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 20.2-3.

[174] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 17.6.

[175] Aper illustrates this by designating the style of Lucilius, Lucretius, Sisenna, Varro and Calvus as 'oldfashioned' (*more prisco*, *Dial. de Orat.* 23.3), whereas the much older Demosthenes is said to live in the

imitate what is ancient, rough and bad; instead, it should explore and imitate those refined works of literature which lead to 'novel and choice methods of eloquence' (*novis et exquisitis eloquentiae itineribus*).[176]

Apparently, only when Aper has argued that there is no real separation between models of the Classical Period and orators of the present, does he feel allowed to integrate and revive aesthetic virtues of classical literature into the present, and to make these virtues acceptable in a modern context. Here, the problematisation of the relation between poetry and prose in the first part of the *Dialogue* turns out to be merely a construct. That the relation between poetry and prose in the *Dialogue* is less antagonistic than one might judge from the confrontation between Maternus and Aper, is suggested by Aper's reference to the desirable integration of poetic features in rhetorical prose, which meets the expectations and requirements of a modern audience:

> *Vulgus quoque adsistentium et adfluens et vagus auditor adsuevit iam exigere laetitiam et pulchritudinem orationis [...] sive sensus aliquis arguta et brevi sententia effulsit, sive locus exquisito et poetico cultu enituit.*[177]

> The general audience, too, and the casual listeners who flock in and out, have come now to insist on a flowery and ornamental style of speaking [...] whether it be the flash of an epigram embodying some conceit in pointed and terse phraseology, or the glamour of some passage of choice poetical beauty.

According to Aper, the audience prefers a 'flowery and ornamental style of speaking' (*laetitiam et pulchritudinem orationis*), as well as an effective style which, in metaphors which remind us of Longinus and Pliny, 'lights up' (*effulsit*) and 'sparkles through a remarkable and poetic ornamentation' (*exquisito et poetico cultu enituit*).[178] Whereas poetry

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present (*Dial. de Orat.* 16.7): *incipit Demosthenes vester, quem vos veterem et antiquum fingitis, non solum eodem anno quo nos, sed etiam eodem mense extitisse* ('it follows that your boasted Demosthenes, whom you make out to be an ancient, one of the olden times, must have lived not only in the same year as ourselves, but also in the same month').

[176] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 19.5.

[177] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 20.3-5.

[178] *Ibid.* More than any of the other authors discussed, Tacitus focuses on the active role played by the audience, and on the fastidious requirements it imposes on the orator. Cf. e.g. Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 20.4: *non solum audire, sed etiam referre domum aliquid inlustre et dignum memoria volunt* ('they are eager not only to hear but also to take home with them some striking and memorable utterance').

was the object of Aper's rejection and disdain in the first part of the *Dialogue*, he now allows poetic features to form the essential components of what a good speech is expected to be like in his own days.[179] Beauty and poetic embellishment are thus desirable stylistic features as long as they are not associated with the past. Consequently, what is good about the past – its beautiful Greek and Latin treasures – is simply annexed by the present and should be imitated, whereas all literary monstrosities (whether or not composed long before the present) should be contemptuously attributed to the atmosphere of a 'gloomy and rough antiquity'.

This pejorative stance towards *antiquitas* in the *Dialogue* is different from the approach of Dionysius and Longinus, for whom the classical past is a treasury of paragons of good style. Even more in the opinion of Longinus than in that of Dionysius, aesthetic and poetic virtues of style are often inseparably linked to the notion of archaism.[180] Their works are imbued with the idea that the literary masterpieces of Homer, Plato, Demosthenes and other champions of classical Greek literature are beautiful *because*, not despite of their age, although Dionysius also rejects some features of what he considers to be 'archaic' in Thucydides and Plato.[181] By the process of imitation, the aesthetic qualities of exemplary classical Greek authors cannot only be honoured, but also revived in the present. Thus, there is an element of archaism in Dionysius' and Longinus' conception of aesthetics, which grants

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[179] Cf. Mayer (2001), 152-153, who argues that 'the increasing use of poetic language and even syntax in the prose of the early Principate is indeed remarkable […]; from Aper's remark we learn that it was a deliberate choice'.

[180] Cf. Porter (2001), 80 on Longinus' *On the Sublime*: "There is an "archaicism" to the classicism of the sublime. […] Indeed, classicist criticism of the Imperial period standardly incorporates archaism in the heart of its aesthetics'. For the notion of archaism, see also Porter (2006), 326-333, and especially his observation that 'elsewhere [e.g. in Longinus, M.S.], in other writers [than Dionysius, M.S.], archaism is more freely admitted to be a mark of all classical writing' (*ibid*., 328). For Dionysius on poetic and aesthetic virtues of style, see esp. section 3.6.2. For Longinus on poetic and aesthetic virtues of style, see section 5.4.

[181] For archaism as a vice in Thucydides, see e.g. Dion. Hal. *Thuc*. 24.1: ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς ἐκλογῆς τῶν ὀνομάτων τὴν τροπικὴν καὶ γλωττηματικὴν καὶ ἀπηρχαιωμένην καὶ ξένην λέξιν προελόμενος ἀντὶ τῆς κοινῆς καὶ συνήθους τοῖς κατ' αὐτὸν ἀνθρώποις ('in his choice of words he preferred those which were metaphorical, obscure, archaic and outlandish to those which were common and familiar to his contemporaries'). Cf. Dion. Hal. *Amm. II*, 2.2. For other passages in Dionysius discussing a style which is ἀπηρχαιωμένη, see Porter (2006), 327-328. For archaism as a vice in Plato, see e.g. Dion. Hal. *Dem*. 5.5: ἐκχεῖται δ' εἰς ἀπειροκάλους περιφράσεις πλοῦτον ὀνομάτων ἐπιδεικνυμένη κενόν, ὑπεριδοῦσά τε τῶν κυρίων καὶ ἐν τῇ κοινῇ χρήσει κειμένων τὰ πεποιημένα ζητεῖ καὶ ξένα καὶ ἀρχαιοπρεπῆ ('it [i.e. Plato's style, M.S.] abandons itself to tasteless circumlocutions and an empty show of verbal exuberance and, in defiance of correct usage and standard vocabulary, seeks artificial, exotic and archaic forms of expression').

literary compositions the beautiful, but dim and weathered layer of corrosion (called 'patina') that is so characteristic of old statues.[182]

In his discussion of examples of rough harmony in the compositions of poets and lyricists, Dionysius points to the works of Aeschylus and Pindar, which display a 'nobility and venerability of harmony preserving the antique patina' (εὐγένεια καὶ σεμνότης ἁρμονίας τὸν ἀρχαῖον φυλάττουσα πίνον).[183] Striking is also Dionysius' description of the austere style as one of which 'the beauty consists in its patina of antiquity' (τὸν ἀρχαϊσμὸν καὶ τὸν πίνον ἔχουσα κάλλος).[184]

Also to Longinus, it is 'the choice of right and lofty words' (ἡ τῶν κυρίων καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶν ὀνομάτων ἐκλογή) that grants our style 'grandeur' (μέγεθος), 'beauty' (κάλλος), 'old-world charm' (εὐπίνειαν), 'weight' (βάρος), 'force' (ἰσχύν), 'strength' (κράτος) and a 'sort of lustre, like the bloom on the surface of the most beautiful bronzes' (γάνωσίν τινα τοῖς λόγοις ὥσπερ ἀγάλμασι καλλίστοις δι' αὐτῆς ἐπανθεῖν παρασκευάζουσα).[185] As in Dionysius, beauty and old-world charm are thus inextricably linked, and paralleled with the beautiful, but faded rust which settles on the surface of bronze statues.

This image of the beauty of dimness, incrustation and decay is reversed in Tacitus, who has Aper arguing that the temples of the present, contrary to the coarse sanctuaries of the past, 'glitter in marble and are all agleam with gold' (*marmore nitent et auro radiantur*), but are no less solid in their construction.[186] There is an even more explicit reversal of the idea of the beauty of πίνος or εὐπίνεια in a passage in which Aper discusses things which should be omitted because they are 'obsolete and musty' (*oblitterata et olentia*).[187] One of his advices is that a word should, as it were, not be 'affected with rust' (*rubigine infectum*).[188] He continues by designating the styles of Lucilius, Lucretius, Sisenna, Varro and Calvus as 'mournful and

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[182] Porter (2001), 80 also notes this correspondence between Dionysius and Longinus.

[183] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 39.7. Cf. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 5.3: πίνος […] ὁ τῆς ἀρχαιότητος ('the patina of old age'); Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 38.6: χνοῦς ἀρχαιοπινής ('a delicate bloom of antique patina'). For a style which is 'antiquity minded' (φιλάρχαιος), cf. *Dem.* 36.5; *Dem.* 38.1; *Dem.* 49.1.

[184] Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 22.6. Cf. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 22.12: κάλλος ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀρχαϊκὸν ἐκεῖνο καὶ αὐστηρόν ('the austere beauty of the distant past'); *Comp.* 22.35: ἀρχαϊκὸν δέ τι καὶ αὔθαδες […] κάλλος ('a sort of archaic and independent beauty of its own').

[185] Longin. *Subl.* 30.1.

[186] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 20.7.

[187] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 22.5.

[188] *Ibid.*

uncultivated' (*maesti et inculti*)', thus contrasting their gloomy and dim stylistic *color* with 'brilliance and refinement of words' (*nitorem et cultum verborum*).[189]

We are allowed to conclude that in Tacitus' *Dialogue*, the idea is prominently expressed that beauty is not connected to what is old, fragmentary and damaged – the 'past' is a dirty word –, or, as Porter writes in relation to the notion of the sublime, to what 'is lost or nearly so';[190] rather, beauty is intrinsically linked to the gleaming splendour of newly built literary compositions, or to those masterpieces (whether they belong to prose or poetry) which meet modern aesthetic taste and, hence, should be reckoned among the present. A style which is beautiful, flowery, lightning, captivating and free of rust (be it the style of a classical orator or a modern writer) transcends all temporal distinctions: it is modern and universal. Only when Tacitus has made a distinction between the 'real', coarse past on the one hand and a past which, regarding mindset and literary taste, should actually be considered 'present', he can pave the way for a direct competition between Greeks and Romans of all times.

5.7 DIO CHRYSOSTOM'S *ORATION* 18

Antiquity and modernity are also important themes in Dio Chrysostom's *Oration* 18. Dio (ca. 40 AD – ca. 120 AD) is considered one of the leading figures of the Second Sophistic.[191] He became a rhetorician and philosopher, and as such travelled through the Roman world during the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva and Trajan. In 82, he was involved in a political intrigue and banished by emperor Domitian from Rome, Italy and even from his native Bithynia. Afther the death of Domitian in 96, Dio's exile came to an end and he was rehabilitated by Nerva. Dio resumed his travels and gave many lectures on ethical, political and rhetorical matters, which were often imbued with his nostalgic affection for the achievements of Ancient Greece. The writings of Dio that have come down to us comprise 76 essays and speeches.

Oration 18, traditionally entitled *On Training for Public Speaking* (Περὶ λόγου ἀσκήσεως), is a speech in which Dio puts forward a reading list of the most important Greek poets and prose authors. Although the date of origin of the work is not certain, many scholars

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[189] Tac. *Dial. de Orat.* 23.6. Cf. n.104.

[190] Porter (2001), 82. Cf. his striking definition (*ibid.*) of the sublime as '[the emotion, M.S.] of the greatness of what is to be Greek on the verge of the attainment or loss of this greatness'. On the defence of modernity in Tacitus' *Dialogue*, see Goldberg (1999).

[191] The following information is based on Cohoon (1932), ix-xvi and Swain (2000), 1-10.

assume that the speech belongs to the earlier works of Dio and is written in the period before his exile, somewhere between 60 AD and 80 AD.[192] Being the only speech which is given the form of a letter within the corpus Dioneum, *Oration* 18 is addressed to an anonymous, busy Greek or Roman statesman, although salutations at the beginning and end of the letter are absent. Dio's epistolary reading list is structured around the same generic categories of literature as appear in Dionysius and Quintilian: first comes poetry, then prose. As for prose, however, Dionysius adopts the order of historiography, philosophy and oratory, whereas Dio and Quintilian have historiography, oratory, and philosophy.[193]

The addressee, an unknown statesman who is 'second to none in influence' (δυνάμει οὐδενὸς λειπόμενον), had not enjoyed thorough rhetorical training for reasons unknown.[194] Therefore, he wants to 'acquire training in eloquent speaking' (φιλοκαλεῖν περὶ τὴν τῶν λόγων ἐμπειρίαν) within a short period of time.[195] In adopting an almost obsequious and servile tone, Dio answers to his request by offering him an extensive list with recommendations. That Dio's selection of Greek poets and prose authors is entirely tailored to a late learner who wants to receive a crash course in rhetoric, is of great importance for understanding the unconventional choices he makes, the unusual judgements he passes on different authors, and the unprecedented advice to keep far away from tough labour:[196]

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[192] See e.g. Von Arnim (1898), 139.

[193] This is also observed by Rutherford (1998), 43.

[194] Dio *Orat*. 18.1.

[195] Dio *Orat*. 18.1. It is not clear who exactly Dio's correspondent – certainly a man of high position – might have been, and whether he was a Roman or a Greek statesman. He has been associated with Titus (e.g. Billault (2004), 515-518) and with Nerva (e.g. von Christ (1920), 363) before they became emperors; other scholars like Hammer (1898), 838 and Lemarchand (1926), 6 are of the opinion that Dio did not address his letter to an actual person. They support the view that *Oration* 18 should be regarded as a sophistic school exercise.

[196] As De Jonge in J. König & N. Wiater (forthc.) offers a detailed examination of the differences between the lists of Dionysius and Dio (and Quintilian), I will confine myself to the most obvious deviations. As for the poets, Dio mentions only three names, and reverses the list of Dionysius (and Quintilian) by placing Menander first and the great Homer last. Dio prefers Euripides and Menander (like Quintilian!), whereas Dionysius' ranking is Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. As for the historians, Dio mentions four names: Herodotus, Thucydides, Theopompus and Ephorus, while Xenophon is discussed as a philosopher. Unlike Dionysius, Dio considers Thucydides more useful than Herodotus and names Xenophon as the most useful author in the entire body of Greek literature, whereas Dionysius thinks Xenophon is only a good imitator of Herodotus, but in this capacity still lacks virtues like sublimity and grandeur. Quintilian, like Dio, admires Xenophon. As for the philosophers, Dio praises Xenophon and excludes all other philosophers (in Dionysius: the Pythagoreans, Xenophon, Plato and Aristotle; in Quintilian: Plato, Xenophon, the Socratics, Aristotle, Theophrastus and the

Τοῦτο μὲν δὴ πρῶτον ἴσθι, ὅτι οὐ δεῖ σοι πόνου καὶ ταλαιπωρίας […].[197]

So first of all, you should know that you have no need of toil or exacting labour […].

This is also pointed out by De Jonge, who, in a thorough comparison between the lists of Dionysius and Dio, argues that Dio's 'shortcut to paideia' should be seen as a 'fanciful adaptation of the genre of rhetorical imitation'.[198] As we will see, this 'fanciful adaptation' is also recognizable in Dio's flexible and ambivalent use of the term μίμησις.

In *Oration* 18, Dio applies the term μίμησις three times, and in each case with respect to the authors he admires most: Menander (1x) and Xenophon (2x). The term ζῆλος is absent in this speech, although it frequently turns up in other speeches of Dio.[199] The first instance of μίμησις in *Oration* 18 does not pertain to the influence of one model upon another, but it is, in a Platonic sense, meant to designate Menander's convincing representation of reality:

[…] ἥ τε γὰρ τοῦ Μενάνδρου μίμησις ἅπαντος ἤθους καὶ χάριτος πᾶσαν ὑπερβέβληκε τὴν δεινότητα τῶν παλαιῶν κωμικῶν […].[200]

[…] for Menander's portrayal of every character and every charming trait surpassed all the skill of the old writers of comedy […].

Also interesting is Dio's application of the term μίμησις with respect to Xenophon. He argues that Xenophon's richness of content may well be a 'norm' (κανών) to anyone who wishes to be guided by him:

Εἰ γοῦν ἐθελήσειας αὐτοῦ τῇ περὶ τὴν Ἀνάβασιν πραγματείᾳ σφόδρα ἐπιμελῶς ἐντυχεῖν, οὐδένα λόγον εὑρήσεις τῶν ὑπὸ σοῦ λεχθῆναι δυνησομένων, ὃν οὐ

Stoics). As for the orators, Dio mentions the same names as Dionysius, leaving out only Isocrates, and adding more recent authors. Quintilian has the same orators as Dionysius, but inserts Demetrius of Phalerum instead of Lycurgus. Although Dio can be said to mention almost the same names, his evaluation of these orators is completely different from especially Dionysius' treatise. Dio recommends Hyperides, Aeschines and Lycurgus for reasons of usefulness, although he admits that Demosthenes and Lysias, champions for Dionysius, are the best.

[197] Dio *Orat*. 18.6.

[198] De Jonge in J. König & N. Wiater (forthc.). On Dio's reading list in comparison with esp. Dionysius and Quintilian, see also Mérot (2017).

[199] Cf. e.g. Dio *Orat*. 21.11, a speech on beauty.

[200] Dio *Orat*. 18.7.

διείληπται καὶ κανόνος ἂν τρόπον ὑπόσχοι τῷ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπευθῦναι ἢ μιμήσασθαι βουλομένῳ.[201]

> If, for instance, you should be willing to read his work on the *March Up Country* very carefully, you will find no speech, such as you will one day possess the ability to make, whose subject matter he has not dealt with and can offer as a kind of norm to any man who wishes to steer his course by him or imitate him.

Here, μιμήσασθαι, because of its conjunction with the verb ἀπευθῦναι ('steer'), has a regulatory connotation: whoever makes Xenophon's speech his model (κανών), may well hope for his vices to be repaired.

From the last occurrence of the term μίμησις, it also becomes clear that imitation is a means to learn and improve one's eloquence. This time, however, Dio uses the verb in a pejorative way, arguing that a hero like Xenophon, with his wide experience in politics, warfare and rhetoric, did not need to 'copy' what others before him had achieved:

> Ἅτε γὰρ, οἶμαι, μιγνὺς ταῖς πράξεσι τοὺς λόγους, οὐκ ἐξ ἀκοῆς παραλαβὼν οὐδὲ μιμησάμενος, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς πράξας ἅμα καὶ εἰπών, πιθανωτάτους ἐποίησεν ἐν ἅπασί τε τοῖς συντάγμασι […].[202]

> For I imagine that it is because he [i.e. Xenophon, M.S.] combines words with deeds, because he did not learn by hearsay nor by imitating, but by doing deeds himself as well as telling of them, that he made his speeches most convincingly true to life in all his works […].

Thus, we may infer that μίμησις is presented as a highly practical means to correct one's errors and to acquire the versatile and realistic eloquence of those great authors who themselves could do without copying others, because their words were based on deeds.

The term used by Dio to designate the ability in eloquent speaking is, as in Quintilian, ἕξις, and Dio's addressee is encouraged to achieve this ability as easily as possible.[203] He

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[201] Dio *Orat*. 18.15.

[202] Dio *Orat*. 18.17.

[203] Cf. e.g. Dio *Orat*. 18.18: […] ἔπειτα πρὸς δύναμιν μὲν ἧττον συλλαμβάνει τοῦ γράφειν, πρὸς ἕξιν δὲ πλεῖον ('again, while it [i.e. dictating to a secretary, M.S.] contributes less to effectiveness than writing does, it contributes more to your habit of readiness').

should, for instance, not read Demosthenes and Lysias, but rather Hyperides and Aeschines, who are more useful:

> [...] τούτων γὰρ ἁπλούστεραί τε αἱ δυνάμεις καὶ εὐληπτότεραι αἱ κατασκευαὶ καὶ τὸ κάλλος τῶν ὀνομάτων οὐδὲν ἐκείνων λειπόμενον.[204]

> [...] for the faculties in which they excel are simpler, their rhetorical embellishments are easier to grasp, and the beauty of their diction is not one whit inferior to that of the two who are ranked first.

It is Xenophon, however, on whose literary qualities Dio dwells most extensively. Xenophon's protreptic speeches, which he made 'most convincingly true to life' (πιθανωτάτους ἐποίησεν), not only aroused all listeners.[205] They also showed them, for instance, how to 'cope with proud people' (μέγα φρονοῦσι [...] ὁμιλῆσαι), how to 'arrange secret deliberations with generals whether or not in the company of soldiers' (ἀπορρήτοις [...] λόγοις [...] χρήσασθαι καὶ πρὸς στρατηγοὺς ἄνευ πλήθους καὶ πρὸς πλῆθος), how to 'converse with kings' (βασιλικοῖς [...] διαλεχθῆναι), how to 'deceive enemies to their detriment and friends to their benefit' (ἐξαπατῆσαι [...] πολεμίους μὲν ἐπὶ βλάβῃ, φίλους δ' ἐπὶ τῷ συμφέροντι), how to 'tell needlessly disturbed people the truth without causing offence' (μάτην ταραττομένοις ἀλύπως τἀληθὲς καὶ πιστῶς εἰπεῖν), and how 'not to trust too readily your superiors' (τὸ μὴ ῥᾳδίως πιστεύειν τοῖς ὑπερέχουσι).[206] Thus, the concept of 'usefulness' in Dio's reading list is entirely meant to serve the social-political duties and aspirations of the addressee, and to allow him to get along with different people in different situations.

The pragmatically oriented Dio, however, does not rule out 'beauty' as a virtue of style, as he argues that the 'simpler faculties' (ἁπλούστεραί [...] αἱ δυνάμεις) of Hyperides and Aeschines do not make their styles inferior to 'the beauty of words' (τὸ κάλλος τῶν ὀνομάτων) of Demosthenes and Lysias.[207] Apparently, to Dio 'beauty' *is* a criterion, although

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[204] Dio *Orat*. 18.11.

[205] Dio *Orat*. 18.17.

[206] Dio *Orat*. 18.16.

[207] Dio *Orat*. 18.11. Cf. De Jonge in J. König & N. Wiater (forthc.), who argues that 'this crucial passage brings out the contrast between two essentially different approaches to classical literature: it is the difference between Dionysius' *On Imitation* and Dio's *On Training for Public Speaking*. Demosthenes and Lysias may be the best orators, as Dio acknowledges; but they are not the most useful reading for an active statesman'.

not a decisive one; it is of subordinate importance compared to what is applicable in modern contexts.[208]

This pragmatic perspective also guides Dio in his preference for the usefulness of more recent compositions over the beauty of older literature, and for prose over poetry.[209] For this, he brings in the comparison of physicians giving their patients what is curative, not what is exuberant:

[…] οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ ἰατροὶ τὰς πολυτελεστάτας τροφὰς συντάττουσι τοῖς θεραπείας δεομένοις, ἀλλὰ τὰς ὠφελίμους.[210]

For physicians do not prescribe the most costly diet for their patients, but that which is salutary.

'Salutary' are for example, as we have seen, Menander's virtues of the 'portrayal of every charming character and every charming trait' (μίμησις ἅπαντος ἤθους καὶ χάριτος), but also Euripides' skills of 'suavity and plausibility' (προσήνεια καὶ πιθανότης), and his ways of treating 'characters and moving incidents' (ἤθη καὶ πάθη) and 'maxims' (γνῶμαι).[211] To Dio, the distance between these authors and the present can easily be bridged, as is expressed by the image of Xenophon 'reaching out a hand' to whoever reads his works thoroughly:

Καὶ εὖ ἴσθι, οὐδένα σοι τρόπον μεταμελήσει, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν βουλῇ καὶ ἐν δήμῳ ὀρέγοντός σοι χεῖρα αἰσθήσῃ τοῦ ἀνδρός, εἰ αὐτῷ προθύμως καὶ φιλοτίμως ἐντυγχάνοις.[212]

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[208] The pragmatic focus of Dio's letter can be explained by pointing to his addressee, his purpose, the stylistic preferences of the Flavian Age, and the genre and tone of a literary letter. On this, see De Jonge in J. König & N. Wiater (forthc.).

[209] For Dio's appeal to read more recent authors, see *Orat.* 18.12: μηδὲ τῶν νεωτέρων καὶ ὀλίγον πρὸ ἡμῶν ἀπείρως ἔχειν) ('not to remain unacquainted with the more recent orators, those who lived a little before our time'). For Dio's remarks on the limited usability of poetry for someone preparing himself for a political career, see *Orat.* 18.8: μέλη δὲ καὶ ἐλεγεῖα καὶ ἴαμβοι καὶ διθύραμβοι τῷ μὲν σχολὴν ἄγοντι πολλοῦ ἄξια· τῷ δὲ πράττειν τε καὶ ἅμα τὰς πράξεις καὶ τοὺς λόγους αὔξειν διανοουμένῳ οὐκ ἂν εἴη πρὸς αὐτὰ σχολή ('lyric and elegiac poetry too, and iambics and dithyrambs are very valuable for the man of leisure, but the man who intends to have a public career and at the same time to increase the scope of his activities and the effectiveness of his oratory, will have no time for them').

[210] Dio *Orat.* 18.7.

[211] Dio *Orat.* 18.7.

[212] Dio *Orat.* 18.17.

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And be well assured that you will have no occasion for regret, but that both in the senate and before the people you will find this great man extending his hand to you if you earnestly and diligently read him.

Dio shows himself perfectly aware of the abnormality of his favourable stance towards more recent authors, for he preemptively covers himself against 'more advanced critics' (τῶν σοφωτέρων) who probably want to chide him for 'selecting Menander's plays in preference to the Old Comedy, or Euripides in preference to the early writers of tragedy' (προκρίναντα τῆς ἀρχαίας κωμῳδίας τὴν Μενάνδρου ἢ τῶν ἀρχαίων τραγῳδῶν Εὐριπίδην).[213] One of these 'advanced critics' may well have been someone like Dionysius of Halicarnassus.[214]

Unlike Dio, Dionysius for instance supports the view that the old and reverent Aeschylus, whom he calls 'sublime' (ὑψηλός), comes first, followed by Sophocles and Euripides.[215] Menander, whose content and style Dionysius admires, is – at least in the epitome – deemed worthy only of a brief mention.[216] Dionysius' exclusive admiration for classical Greek authors is dismissed by Dio, since he is of the opinion that it impairs a student's self-confidence by enslaving his judgement:

> Αἱ γὰρ τούτων δυνάμεις καὶ ταύτῃ ἂν εἶεν ἡμῖν ὠφέλιμοι, ᾗ οὐκ ἂν ἐντυγχάνοιμεν αὐτοῖς δεδουλωμένοι τὴν γνώμην, ὥσπερ τοῖς παλαιοῖς. Ὑπὸ γὰρ τοῦ δύνασθαί τι τῶν εἰρημένων αἰτιάσασθαι μάλιστα θαρροῦμεν πρὸς τὸ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐπιχειρεῖν ἡμεῖς, καὶ ἥδιόν τις παραβάλλει αὐτὸν ᾧ πείθεται συγκρινόμενος οὐ καταδεέστερος, ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ βελτίων ἂν φαίνεσθαι.[217]

> For the powers they [i.e. the more recent authors, M.S.] display can be more useful to us also in this way because when we read them, our judgement is not enslaved, as it is when we approach the ancients. For when we find that we are able to criticise what was said, we are most encouraged to attempt the same things ourselves. And one will more happily compare oneself to another when one believes that in the comparison he should be found to be not inferior to him, with the chance, occasionally, of being even superior.

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[213] Dio *Orat*. 18.7.

[214] This is also observed by De Jonge in J. König & N. Wiater (forthc.).

[215] Dion. Hal. *Imit*. 2.10-13.

[216] Dion. Hal. *Imit*. 2.14.

[217] Dio *Orat*. 18.12.

The motif of the enslavement of our judgement by studying ancient writers can be found in a reversed way in Longinus.[218] At the end of *On the Sublime*, Longinus posits that it is the freedom of Athenian democracy which fostered the production of great literature, whereas people in his own time are enslaved by self-indulgence and greed – causes for the decline of rhetoric which are also presented in Tacitus' *Dialogue*.[219] Thus, here again, Dio deviates in a playful way from other classicising critics.

Dio, however, is not alone in his attitude to make authors whose works display 'beauty' and 'sublimity' subordinate to those for whom pragmatic virtues have greater priority, nor is he unique in favouring Euripides, although this tragedian's qualities 'perhaps do not completely attain the grandeur of the tragic poet's [i.e. Sophocles', M.S.] way of deifying his characters, or his high dignity' (τοῦ μὲν τραγικοῦ ἀπαθανατισμοῦ καὶ ἀξιώματος τυχὸν οὐκ ἂν τελέως ἐφικνοῖτο).[220] It is Quintilian who, in surprisingly similar idiom, shares and repeats Dio's ideas that Euripides is the 'most useful' (*utiliorem*) tragedian, though he admits that Sophocles is often considered 'more sublime' (*sublimior*) for his 'dignity' (*gravitas*), 'tragic grandeur' (*coturnus*) and 'resonance' (*sonus*).[221] Although Dio in many of his choices differs not only from Dionysius, but also from Quintilian and even all traditional rhetoric, we can conclude that in some respects, both he and his contemporary Quintilian do not adopt the deep-rooted aesthetic approach which is so characteristic of Dionysius' treatises, but also of the ideas on imitation expressed by Aelius Theon, Longinus and Pliny.[222]

5.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have seen that the Greek and Roman authors discussed drew from and contributed to a common discourse of imitation, but also adapted (elements from) this shared discourse to their own, personal agenda, which is determined by factors such as text genre and text goal, the person of the addressee, personal literary taste, specific attittudes towards prose and poetry, present and past, and different interpretations of the concepts of beauty and usefulness of literature. All these factors allow us to discern various interconnections between

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[218] This is also observed by De Jonge in J. König & N. Wiater (forthc.).

[219] Longin. *Subl*. 44; Tac. *Dial. de Orat*. 28-29.

[220] Dio *Orat*. 18.7.

[221] Quint. 10.1.67-68. Cf. section 4.7.

[222] In Tac. *Dial. de Orat*., beauty is an important criterion as far as it is connected with the present.

Greek and Latin authors, and to arrange them in groups on the basis of parameters other than 'Greekness' and 'Romanness'.

First of all, for all of the Greek and Latin authors discussed the process of imitation consists of a set of stages, which are distinguished more or less clearly: 1) the intensive and repeated study of a wide variety of literary models, 2) the acquisition of a sharp judgement, 3) the selection of what is best in the models chosen, and 4) the eclectic and original composition of a new work of literature. Furthermore, they all discuss classical Greek models whom they consider to be of paramount use for people involved with rhetoric.

The notions of μίμησις and ζῆλος and *imitatio* and *aemulatio* need not (always) be distinguished. When only μίμησις or *imitatio* is used, it is likely that ζῆλος or *aemulatio* is also implied, unless the terms are clearly opposed (as is often the case in the *Letters* of Pliny, as in Quintilian's *Institutio*). Possibly the term *aemulatio* denoting literary emulation was not yet fully established in the first century AD, which could also explain Quintilian's wary paraphrases of *aemulatio* in the *Institutio*. As a result of the general tendency to refer to the complex of imitation and emulation together by using only one term, we observe an amalgam of metaphors which often remind us of the conceptualisations of μίμησις and ζῆλος in Dionysius and *imitatio* and *aemulatio* in Quintilian as discussed in chapter 2. The use of similar metaphors suggests that the authors discussed articulated and exchanged rhetorical-critical ideas, and shared a Graeco-Roman framework of imitation with which they probably became acquainted during their training in the rhetorical schools of Rome.

Concerning the activity of imitating, we have seen that Aelius Theon, Longinus, and Seneca adopt the image of the movement of the soul to designate the inspiration by and thorough internalisation of literary models. This reminds us of Dionysius' definition of ζῆλος as an 'activity of the soul, of being moved towards wonder at what seems to be beautiful' (ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς πρὸς θαῦμα τοῦ δοκοῦντος εἶναι καλοῦ κινουμένη, *Imit*. fr. III U-R), but also of Quintilian's statement that 'our mind must be guided towards the model of all virtues' (*ad exemplum virtutum omnium mens derigenda*, 10.2.1).[223]

Another recurring metaphor for the activity of imitating is that of food and digestion. This metaphor, which is suggestive of the importance of internalizing and harmonizing a great variety of (aspects of) different literary models, is applied by Aelius Theon, who insists on a 'nourishment of style' (τροφὴ λέξεως, *Progymn*. 61.31), but also by Seneca, who argues that

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[223] Dion. Hal. *Imit*. fr. III U-R = 2 Aujac = 2 Battisti.

'reading nourishes the mind' (*alit lectio ingenium, Ep.* 84.1).[224] The latter, however, also expands the use of the metaphor of food, applying it not only as an image for the wide range of literature that has to become an inherent part of our mind, but also for the product of imitation, which is comparable to a balanced meal consisting of a wide variety of ingredients.

The activity of imitating is also frequently described in terms of competition and competitive aspiration. This is especially true for Longinus, whose concept of ζήλωσις (which overshadows the concept of μίμησις) is outlined by the image of Plato fighting with Homer, but also for Pliny, who understands *aemulatio* as the competitive aspiration of surpassing those masterpieces (especially Cicero's) which one's *intellegentia* and *ingenium* can grasp thoroughly. For Pliny, however, *aemulatio* can also be out of place and become impudent and mad. Here he sides with Dionysius, who refers to the positive, competitive and aspirative aspect of imitation by using the notion of ζῆλος, but also to literary zeal which degenerates into craze and jealousy. For Quintilian, *aemulatio* is only a highly recommended, competitive concept, often (and more prominently than in Greek texts) presented with the imagery of foot races, battles, and gladiator fights.

In both Greek and Latin texts, the striking effects of the product of imitation – i.e. the text of the imitator – upon the audience are often conceptualised by using imagery of natural phenomena. Longinus' use of metaphors of thunder and lightning, fire and raging streams to express the overwhelming power of rhetorical sublimity is, as we have seen, abundant. In his *Letters*, Pliny makes a plea for a style which is 'grand, spacious and sublime' (*lata et magnifica and excelsa,* 1.20.19), which 'thunders and lightens' (*tonat, fulgurat, ibid*.), and is 'like the winter snows' (*similem nivibus hibernis,* 1.20.22). Tacitus applies the imagery of lightning to describe the astonishing effects that speeches can (and indeed should) have upon the audience (cf. *effulsit, Dial. de Orat.* 20.3). Of course, the framing of language in terms of weather conditions is as old as Homer. Nevertheless, the fact that contemporary Greek and Latin authors who are (more or less critically) concerned with imitation and style drew from a similar treasury of metaphors, suggests that these authors could select from a common literary-critical discourse and reservoir of ideas those aspects that could serve their rhetorical agenda most effectively.

The agenda of each of the authors discussed is in the first place determined by factors such as text genre, text goal and the person of the addressee. Aelius Theon provides teachers

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[224] Cf. e.g. also Quint. 10.1.58, who draws a comparison between reading good and less good authors and eating exquisite and less exquisite dishes for the sake of variety.

in rhetoric with mimetic exercises for their students, who should become acquainted with beautiful literature; in a letter to his friend Lucilius, Seneca rather essayistically reflects on the subject of literary imitation in general; Longinus claims to offer his Roman addressee Postumius Terentianus a ὑπόμνημα in which imitation is presented as a road towards the ultimate goal of all literary effort, i.e. sublimity; Pliny touches upon his interpretation and activities of imitation and emulation in several of his letters to a variety of Roman recipients; in a highly literary dialogue, Tacitus renders the words of Roman men of letters who are concerned with issues such as imitation and rhetorical decline; and finally, Dio addresses an unknown Greek or Roman statesman who needs a crash course in literature for the sake of his own career. Not surprisingly, all these different frameworks induce different choices and accents concerning the subject of imitation. This is perhaps most obvious in Dio, who, as we have seen, playfully reverses the traditional mimetic mantra of laborious study because his addressee has little time.

However different the angles from which the Greek and Latin authors approach the subject of imitation, they are confronted with the very same tension between two quintessential mimetic criteria: literary beauty on the one hand and rhetorical-practical usefulness on the other.[225] In addressing this problem, the authors discussed – whatever their purpose – more or less explicitly reveal their personal tastes and deep-rooted convictions concerning the status of and connections between these criteria. Apart from the various correspondences and crosslinks between Greek and Latin authors on the level of mimetic terminology and metaphorical imagery, we can also clearly observe cross-cultural parallels in the ways in which the tension between literary beauty and rhetorical-practical usefulness is addressed. While insisting on practical usefulness, Aelius Theon, Longinus and Pliny, like Dionysius, advocate a remarkably aesthetic interpretation of imitation, in which the study of often more ancient authors who are famous for their beauty and magnificence of style is of central concern. By contrast, Dio and (the interlocutors in) Tacitus, like Quintilian, proclaim a study of often more modern authors, the aim of which is practically oriented even more than aesthetically motivated. They may well represent a later stage in the history of imperial classicism, which is not so much focused on a revival of Greek paragons of stylistic beauty and magnificence as on the applicability of former Greek literature in a modern Roman society.

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[225] In *Ep*. 84, Seneca does not touch upon literary beauty and usefulness. Therefore, I can only fruitfully compare him with the Greek and Latin authors discussed as far as the discourse of imitation is concerned.