How to compose great prose: Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and stylistic theory in Late-Republican and Augustan Rome
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Chapter 3
THE PLAIN, THE GRAND AND THE IN-BETWEEN:
THE DOCTRINE OF THREE STYLES AS A VERSATILE CRITICAL TOOL

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have learnt that Cicero and Dionysius both consider versatility a prime feature of excellent literature: they attribute this cardinal virtue to Attic prose in general and to Demosthenes' oratory in particular. In addition, we have seen that they adopt similar, though far from identical, threefold stylistic divisions to make sense of the resourceful flexibility of their literary heroes, applying it not only to Demosthenes, but also to other prose authors such as Thucydides, Lysias and Isocrates, and, in Dionysius' case, to various poets, from Homer to Hesiod, from Pindar to Sappho, and from Aeschylus to Euripides. In this chapter, we will take a closer look at these three-style classifications, exploring the relevant similarities and differences between the extant versions of the triple scheme, paying special attention to the cross-connections between the surviving Greek and Latin tripartitions.

The doctrine which holds that there are 'three types of style' (χαρακτῆρες τῆς λέξεως, *genera dicendi*)—one plain, one intermediate and one grand—is attested for the first time in the first century BC. The earliest extant articulations of the theory are in Latin, in the fourth book of the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and in Cicero's rhetorical treatises, especially in his *Orator.* Varro also deals with the theory, but the evidence is too vague to make confident statements about his teachings on the topic.[1] It is usually assumed that these Latin sources reflect an older Hellenistic tradition, whose precise origins are now lost in the meager record of that era.[2] In the extant sources on Greek stylistic theory, however, we typically do not find threefold stylistic divisions, but rather fourfold categorizations (Demetrius, Philodemus) and more elaborate systems (Hermogenes, pseudo-Aristides).[3] Our

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[1] *Rhet. Her.* 4.11–16, Cic. *De or.* 3.177, 3.199, 3.212, *Orat.* 20–139, *Opt. gen.* 1–6. According to Gell. *NA* 6.14.6 (= Varro fr. 80 Wilmanns), Varro links Latin dramatic poets to all three styles: he connects the tragic poet Pacuvius to 'abundance' (*ubertas*), the satirist Lucilius to 'slenderness' (*gracilitas*), and the comic poet Terentius to the 'middle style' (*mediocritas*). In the passage, it is not entirely clear at which point Gellius stops paraphrasing Varro: section 3.3 n. 51 below. Varro's lost work *On Types* (Περὶ χαρακτήρων), ascribed to him by Charisius *Gramm.* 2.246 Barwick, dealt with the grammatical formation of words, not with types of style.

[2] Cf. section 1.2 above on source criticism and the hellenocentric approach to ancient stylistic theory.

[3] Demetr. *Eloc.* recognizes the 'plain' (ἰσχνός), 'smooth' (γλαφυρός), 'grand' (μεγαλοπρεπής) and 'forceful' (δεινός) registers. The relationship between Demetrius' fourfold scheme and the extant three-style systems is the

first Greek source for the theory of three styles is Dionysius of Halicarnassus, specifically his treatises *On Demosthenes* and *On the Arrangement of Words*. After Dionysius, the three-style formula is rarely attested in Greek sources.[4] Thus, threefold divisions of style seem to have been a typical feature of the stylistic discourse in Late-Republican and Augustan Rome. Later Latin critics, such as Quintilian and Augustine, retain the division, mainly on the authority of Cicero: this tradition continues until the end of the Middle Ages.[5]

Modern scholars are interested in the ancient theory of three styles for roughly two reasons: one concerns the origin of the theory, the other its usefulness as a critical tool. First, there is a long-standing and still undecided debate about the ultimate provenance and early development of the theory.[6] The dichotomy between the grand and the plain, which forms the

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subject of some discussion: Kennedy (1963) 284, Calcante (2000) 142–152, id. (2004) 100–103 and Marini (2007) 179–183 claim that Demetrius' division is an adaptation of an older threefold system, but others, such as Schenkeveld (1964) 54–55 and, abandoning his earlier view, Kennedy (1989) 196, have more convincingly argued that Demetrius does not refer to any three-style system. Rather, as Demetr. *Eloc.* 36 explicitly states, the four-style doctrine is an elaboration of the standard two-style view that is dominant in Greek criticism before Rome and that also forms the basis of the surviving threefold doctrines: see the next paragraph below. Philod. *Rhet.* 4 col. 4.2–5 p. 165 Sudhaus seems to distinguish between four 'forms' (πλάσματα), viz., 'plainness' (ἰσχνότης), 'smoothness' (γλαφυρότης), 'grand writing' (ἁδρογραφία) and a fourth type whose name is illegible apart from an initial μ: Sudhaus conjectures the word μεσότης, which he draws from the three-style formula, whereas Radermacher (1899a) 361 proposes μέγεθος, which connects Philodemus' division with Demetrius' scheme, provided that Philodemus' ἁδρογραφία corresponds to Demetrius' χαρακτὴρ δεινός. On fourfold constructs in ancient thought, see Usener (1913). In the second century AD, Hermog. *Id.* and [Aristid.] articulate complex systems of many 'types' (ἰδέαι) of style: see Wooten (1987) and Rutherford (1998).

[4] See Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 1–34 for the three 'types of diction' (χαρακτῆρες τῆς λέξεως), and ibid. 35–52 and *Comp.* 21–24 for the three 'types of arrangement' (χαρακτῆρες τῆς συνθέσεως): cf. sections 3.2.1 and 3.3 below for the interconnections between both systems. [Plut.] *Vit. Hom.* 172–173 and Procl. *Chr.* (in Phot. *Bibl.* cod. 239) both articulate three-style divisions. Nünlist (2009) 219–221 notes that the three styles have had little influence on the scholia: a possible reference can be found in schol. bT *Il.* 21.257–62a which states that Homer 'makes a transition from the grand style to the plain and florid' (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁδροῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ἰσχνὸν ἔρχεται καὶ ἀνθηρόν). Cf. section 3.2.2 n. 46 below on Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.58, who describes the middle style as 'florid'. See also section 3.3 below on Odysseus, Menelaus and Nestor as stylistic prototypes. Rutherford (1998) 10–18 discusses the connections between Dionysius' three styles and the intricate stylistic divisions in Hermog. and [Aristid.].

[5] Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.58–72, August. *Doctr. christ.* 4.32–58. For Augustine's treatment of the three styles, see Sluiter (1999) 256–260. For the late-antique and medieval tradition, see Quadlbauer (1962): cf. n. 6 below.

[6] The modern discussions of the ancient history of the three styles adopts various approaches. Schmid (1894), for one, reconstructs the tradition, working his way back from Procl. *Chr.* and arguing that the theory originates in the Stoa. Hendrickson (1905), conversely, explores the Peripatetic background of the theory: cf. esp. section 3.5 below. Next, Wehrli (1946) addresses the connection between poetic and rhetorical theory, tracing the doctrine

backbone of the three-style doctrine, deeply influences Greek literary criticism from Homer onwards: the poet already portrays Menelaus as speaking plainly, whereas he ascribes to Odysseus a more elevated style. A similar contrast is drawn up in the famous contest between Euripides and Aeschylus in Aristophanes' *Frogs*.[7] The concept of an intermediate style seems to have been a later addition to this binary scheme. The Peripatetic school has been extremely influential with its focus on the appropriate mean (μεσότης) between the two stylistic extremes: in the third book of his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle prescribes that style should be 'neither base nor elevated above the subject matter, but appropriate' (πρέπουσα). Indeed, the criterion of 'appropriateness' (τὸ πρέπον, *decorum*, *aptum*) is a major ingredient in the extant three-style divisions of Late-Republican and Augustan Rome: the surviving critics and rhetoricians insist that style should be appropriate to the purpose of the speech, to the subject matter under discussion, to the particular section of the speech, to the moral character of the speaker, and to the composition of the audience.[8]

The hottest issue in the secondary literature about the origin of the three styles is the debate as to whether Aristotle's successor in the Lyceum, Theophrastus, was the first to develop a full-blown theory of three styles.[9] The matter hinges almost entirely on the

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back to the debate about φύσις and τέχνη in the fifth century BC. Augustyniak (1957) addresses the interplay between theories of three styles and fourfold doctrines. Quadlbauer (1958) and (1962) traces the history of the threefold division from Homer until the Middle Ages: his approach, however, is rather narrow, mostly limited to issues of grammar and sentence structure. For the supposed Theophrastean origin, see the next paragraph below.

[7] See section 3.3 below on Hom. *Il.* 3.212–224 (Menelaus and Odysseus) and ibid. 1.247–249 (Nestor). O'Sullivan (1992) and Hunter (2009) 29–36 establish the strong connections between the *agon* in Ar. *Ran.* 830–1117 and various later sources of criticism, such as Arist. *Rh.*, Demetr. *Eloc.*, Dion. Hal. and Long. *Subl.* Note that the dichotomy between simplicity and elevation is also present in Demetrius' fourfold scheme: at *Eloc.* 36, he explains that the 'plain' (ἰσχνός) and 'grand' (μεγαλοπρεπής) styles 'stand, as it were in polar opposition and contrast' (ὥσπερ ἀνθέστατον καὶ ἀντίκειθον ἐναντιωτάτω).

[8] Arist. *Rh.* 3.2: 'Let the virtue of style be defined as 'to be clear' (…) and neither flat nor above the dignity of the subject, but appropriate' (ὡρίσθω λέξεως ἀρετὴ σαφῆ εἶναι ... καὶ μήτε ταπεινὴν μήτε ὑπὲρ τὸ ἀξίωμα ἀλλὰ πρέπουσαν). Transl. Kennedy (1991). See section 3.5 below on the Peripatetic notion of the stylistic mean in Dionysius' three-style doctrines. Our sources present the middle style as a later addition to the existing two opposite styles: cf. Cic. *Orat.* 21 (*interiectus inter hos medius*), Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 3.1 (μικτή τε καὶ σύνθετος ἐκ τούτων τῶν δυεῖν), Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.58 (*tertium addiderunt*). The virtue of appropriateness is stressed by Cic. *De or.* 3.199, *Orat.* 70–74; Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 34.5, *Comp.* 12.10, *Pomp.* 3.20; Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.69–72.

[9] Before Hendrickson (1904) and (1905), it was generally believed that Theophrastus had been the founding father of the theory of three styles: see e.g. Radermacher (1899b). After Hendrickson's seminal articles, however, there is an ongoing debate about the Theophrastean origin of the doctrine: Kroll (1907), Mayer (1910),

interpretation of one particular passage in Dionysius' *On Demosthenes*, which discusses the origin of the middle style: Dionysius credits Theophrastus with the opinion that Thrasymachus of Chalcedon was the inventor of the intermediate register. It is on the basis of this testimony that many scholars have argued that Theophrastus must have discussed the three styles in his lost work *On Style* (Περὶ λέξεως). Yet, it is equally possible that the Peripatetic scholar recognized in Thrasymachus' style a 'source for the mean' (πηγή τις τῆς μεσότητος), as Dionysius puts it, an appropriate mean between excess and deficiency, without acknowledging the existence of three separate stylistic levels.[10] Moreover, it is hard to imagine that the philosopher would have approved of a style that is anything else than an appropriate mean, or, to put it in John Hendrickson's words: 'The μεσότης was to Theophrastus not *a* style, but *the* style.'[11] There is very little material except for the passage from Dionysius to support the thesis that Theophrastus discussed a three-style theory, nor indeed is there any hard proof for its existence prior to the first century BC.[12]

Augstyniak (1957), Kennedy (1956), (1957b), (1963) 278–282, though he later changed his position, Quadlbauer (1958) 64–71 and Janko (2000) 156–157 maintain that the Peripatetic was the first to put forward the theory, while Stroux (1912) 88–104, Grube (1952), (1965) 107–108, Innes (1985) 260–263, Kennedy (1989) 195 and Fortenbaugh (2005) 273–278 argue that the philosopher knew no threefold theory. Cf. the notes below.

[10] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 3.1 (= Theophr. fr. 685 Fortenbaugh): 'The third kind of style was a mixture formed by combining the other two; whether the person who joined them together and brought it to its present splendor was Theophrastus of Chalcedon, as Theophrastus thinks, or somebody else, I cannot say' (τρίτη λέξεως ἰδέα ἦν ἡ μικτή τε καὶ σύνθετις ἐκ τούτων τῶν δυεῖν, ἣν ὁ μὲν πρῶτος ἁρμοσάμενος καὶ καταστήσας εἰς τὸν νῦν ὑπάρχοντα κόσμον εἴτε Θρασύμαχος ὁ Χαλκηδόνιος ἦν, ὡς οἴεται Θεόφραστος, εἴτε ἄλλος τις, οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν). The view that Theophrastus advocated not three styles but a stylistic mean only is first put forward by Hendrickson (1904) and subsequently adopted by many other scholars (cf. n. 9 above): important contributors to this thesis are Grube (1965), who shows that Dionysius' λέξις refers specifically to diction (cf. section 3.2 below) and that we, hence, cannot attribute Theophrastus a conception of middle style but rather the notion of 'a mean or middle diction, that is, the development of a prose vocabulary', and Innes (1985) 260–263, who adds that the philosopher advocated the mean not only in diction, but also in rhythm and probably sentence structure. See Fortenbaugh (2005) 273–278 for an overview of the secondary literature on Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 3.1–5: Fortenbaugh considers the possibility that the phrase 'a source for the mean' (πηγή τις τῆς μεσότητος) was used by Theophrastus himself in relation to the style of Thrasymachus. On the connections between the Peripatetic mean and Dionysius' three styles, see section 3.5 below.

[11] Hendrickson (1904) 140.

[12] Mayer (1910) 1–50 finds additional evidence for the Theophrastean origin of the three-style doctrine in Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 3.1, reporting that the Peripatetic lists three means to achieve 'grandeur, dignity and impressiveness' (τὸ μέγα καὶ σεμνὸν καὶ περιττόν). As Grube (1952) 266 argues, however, the quoted adjectives are used in a general sense of distinction or excellence in a writer: they do not indicate a familiarity with the notion of a grand

An unfortunate side effect of the scholarly focus on the prehistory of the theory of three styles is that the critics and rhetoricians in Rome are often imagined as rather passive recipients of older doctrines. In the search for the primordial inventor of the theory, the originality and variety of the extant sources tend to be overlooked.[13] The only aspect of the theory that is generally considered to be an innovation of the first century BC is the connection that Cicero makes between the three types of style and the three so-called 'functions of the orator' (*officia oratoris*), that is, 'teaching, placating and moving' (*docere, conciliare, movere*), or, alternatively, 'proving, entertaining and swaying' (*probare, delectare, flectere*). This link becomes a standard feature in Latin rhetorical theory, but it is not found in Dionysius.[14] As I explained in the introduction to this dissertation (section 1.2), I will adopt a synchronic perspective to the stylistic theories in the works of Cicero, Dionysius and their contemporaries, focusing not on the origins or afterlife of their doctrines, but rather on the underlying goals and motivations. No matter when the theory of the three styles was first articulated, I will focus on its various applications in the Greek and Latin stylistic discourse of Late-Republican and Augustan Rome, when the threefold doctrine was one of the go-to critical tools for the analysis of literary prose.

A second line of inquiry in modern studies of the three styles focuses on the usefulness of the theory: are the threefold systems at all useful for the stylistic analysis of classical Greek and Latin prose? Can Cicero's articulation of the doctrine, for instance, be applied to his own speeches? Some scholars have answered these questions in the affirmative,[15] but the

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style, cf. Nünlist (2009) 221. Kennedy (1957b) cogently refutes various assertions by others, who claim to have found traces of the theory of three styles in Greek sources from the Classical and Hellenistic eras.

[13] An extreme example of this attitude can be found in Peterson (1891) 44 on Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.58: 'This threefold division of style, ascribed to Theophrastus, was generally *recognized* in Greece after the latter part of the fourth century B.C. (…) It is *adopted* in Cornif. ad Herenn. (…) and is *carefully explained* by Cicero in the Orator (…) Dion. Hal. (probably *following* Theophrastus περὶ λέξεως) has *the same* division (…). Quintilian *repeats* this.' The italics are mine.

[14] The first attestation of the fusion of the three styles and the three functions of the orator is Cic. *Orat.* 69: 'There are as many types of style as there are functions of the orator' (*Quot officia oratoris tot sunt genera dicendi*). According to Douglas (1957), this is a 'Ciceronian contribution to rhetorical theory'. See section 3.2, esp. table 3 below. For later articulations of the theory, see Austin (1948) 199–200 on Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.59, and Sluiter (1999) 256–260 on August. *Doctr. christ.* 4.34.

[15] For an optimistic view about the usefulness of the three-style doctrine for the analysis of Cicero's speeches, see Adamik (1995), who shares the positive appreciation of the French scholars Laurand (1907) and Marouzeau (1935): 'Theoretical and practical informations of the Latin rhetoricians are useful for analyzing their speeches, because they help to recover the intentions of their authors.'

predominant scholarly opinion is that the theory is of limited use in the study of ancient literature. Dionysius and Quintilian, two major exponents of the doctrine, already admit that the threefold division is inherently inaccurate in the face of the sheer myriad of potentially and actually existing styles.[16] In modern literature, the theory of three styles is often considered a cliché and not very helpful at all: it has been called 'rather meaningless' (Grube), 'at best a widely accepted pedagogic convenience' (Russell), 'virtually useless as a tool for serious literary criticism' (Douglas), 'not very illuminating and even constrictive' (Wooten), and, in milder terms, 'more or less true to the broad facts; but it falls short in precision when it comes to details' (Powell).[17] Indeed, vague and broad concepts such as 'plain', 'intermediate' and 'grand' seem out of place in a nuanced and refined discussion of style.

In a word, the three-style formula is seen by many scholars as both unoriginal and unpractical. Concerning the presumed unoriginality, I will contend that the opposite is true. I will show that the three authors who deal with the topic most extensively (the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium,* Cicero, Dionysius) do not simply copy a rigid, monolithic doctrine of three styles from their illustrious predecessors: on the contrary, the theory proves to be highly flexible and the categories involved turn out to be exceedingly fluid (section 3.2). As, during the first century BC, the critics and rhetoricians in Rome became increasingly obsessed with the literature and style of Classical Greece, this malleable theory came to be used as a convenient framework to analyze and categorize the Greek literary heritage (section 3.3). The surviving three-style systems vary considerably: Dionysius, for instance, argues, as we have seen, that the middle style is the best style and that its ultimate champion is Demosthenes (section 2.3.3), whereas Cicero considers the middle style the least important of the three registers, proposing the ambivalent Peripatetic philosopher Demetrius of Phalerum as its prototypical exponent. Cicero's grand style, in addition, is represented by the orator Pericles, while Dionysius selects the historian Thucydides as the exemplary author of the elevated style.[18]

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[16] Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.66: 'Eloquence is not limited to these three patterns' (*sed neque his tribus quasi formis inclusa eloquentia est*). Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 21.1: 'I hold the view that there are very many distinct forms of word arrangement, which can be included neither in a comprehensive view nor in a detailed reckoning' (ἐγὼ τῆς συνθέσεως εἰδικὰς μὲν διαφορὰς πολλὰς σφόδρα εἶναι τίθεμαι καὶ οὔτ' εἰς σύνοψιν ἐλθεῖν δυναμένας οὔτ' εἰς λογισμὸν ἀκριβῆ).

[17] Grube (1952) 267, Russell (1964) xxxv, Douglas (1973) 115, Wooten (1989) 587, Powell (2013a) 53.

[18] For Cicero's and Dionysius' categorizations of Greek authors according to the three styles, see section 3.3 table 7 below.

Next, I will address the issue of the practical application of the theory. Although I must admit that the three styles seem of limited use for the analysis of the artistic subtleties inherent in Greek and Latin literary prose, we will see that the theoretical exposés of Cicero and Dionysius do serve a practical purpose, albeit a different one: they use the triple scheme not in every part of their oeuvre, adducing it only when they need it to prove a particular point. Cicero, for one, barely mentions the three styles in his *De Oratore*, while in his *Brutus* he propagates a system of two rather than three styles; yet, in his *Orator*, he relies heavily on a threefold system, which he skillfully puts to use in his polemic against the self-proclaimed Attic orators in Rome (section 3.4). Similarly, Dionysius does not refer to the theory in his works on Lysias, Isocrates, Isaeus or Thucydides, but he dwells on it at length in his *On Demosthenes*, where he uses it to demonstrate the stylistic versatility and universal appeal of Demosthenes, and again in *On the Arrangement of Words*, where he makes a similar point about stylistic adaptability (section 3.5). Hence, the differences between the threefold systems that Cicero and Dionysius expound can to a large extent by attributed to the different programs that the authors articulate in their works.

There is, lastly, a more general point to make about the practical use of the three-style doctrine (section 3.6). Both Cicero and Dionysius claim, as we have already seen, that the orator who is proficient in all three styles will be successful in the real-life oratory of forensic and deliberative speeches (sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3). Thus, Cicero and Dionysius do not only use the theory of three styles to analyze the shared literary heritage of classical Greece, but they also use it to point the way to rhetorical success in the contemporary Roman world. In a practical vein, both the Roman rhetorician and the Greek critic take the makeup of the audience into account in their discussions of the three styles: the audience that Cicero evokes, however, is not identical to the public that Dionysius refers to. The former connects his three-style theory specifically to the Roman masses on the Forum, while the latter generally makes reference to congregations of Greek crowds in the 'public assemblies' (ἐκκλησίαι) and 'law-courts' (δικαστήρια).[19] We will see that a Greek audience, apparently, calls for a different application of the three styles than a Roman audience.

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[19] I do not argue that Dionysius' works are not meant for Roman readers: *Comp.* was addressed to the young Roman aristocrat Metilius Rufus, and *Thuc.* to the Roman historian and lawyer Q. Aelius Tubero. For Dionysius' audience, see section 1.5 above. It is, however, a well-established fact that Dionysius' literary essays only refer to Greek literature and, as we will see in section 3.6 below, to the Greek contexts of that literature. Metilius Rufus became proconsul of Achaea and, perhaps, legate of Galatia, where he had many opportunities to put Dionysius' teachings about rhetoric into practice: cf. section 1.5 n. 91 above.

3.2 Versatile Systems of Three Styles

The versatility of the threefold formula is reflected in the vocabulary of its users. Quintilian provides the locus classicus for the Greek and Latin terminology of the three styles: 'One style (*genus*) is defined as *subtile* (Greek ἰσχνόν), a second as *grande* and *robustum* (Greek ἁδρόν), and to these has been added a third, called by some *medium ex duobus*, and by other *floridum* (for the Greeks call it ἀνθηρόν).'[20] The Greek antithetical pair ἰσχνόν versus ἁδρόν and the Latin translation *subtile* versus *grande* refer to opposite appearances of the human body: one style is imagined as a 'thin' or 'slim' body, while its counterpart is described as 'thick' or 'stout'.[21] The middle style is usually regarded simply as 'intermediate' between these two extremes, although it is sometimes thought of as 'flowery'.[22]

	Varro (Gell. *NA* 6.14.5)	*Rhet. Her.* 4.11–16	Cic. *De or.* 3.177, 3.199, 3.212, *Opt. gen.* 1–6, *Orat.* 20–139
1	**gracilitas** (slender)	*figura* **adtenuata** (thin)	orator **tenuis**, **subtilis** (thin), **acutus** (astute), **submissus** (calm), **humilis** (low), **brevis** (concise)
2	**mediocritas** (intermediate)	*figura* **mediocris** (intermediate)	orator **mediocris**, **medius**, **interiectus** (intermediate), **temperatus** (moderate), **modicus** (modest)
3	**ubertas** (abundant)	*figura* **gravis** (heavy)	orator **gravis** (heavy), **plenus** (full), **copiosus** (rich), **vehemens** (passionate), **grandiloquus** (grand)

Table 1: Latin terminology for the three styles (first century BC)

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[20] Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.58: *Namque unum subtile, quod* ἰσχνόν *vocant, alteram grande et robustum, quod* ἁδρόν *dicunt, constituunt, tertium alii medium ex duobus, alii floridum (namque id* ἀνθηρόν *appellant) addiderunt.* Russell (1964) xxxvi and Lausberg (2008) 472–475 offer concise overviews of the ancient terminology of the three styles, relying heavily on Quintilian's terminology: convenient as they are, these synopses reinforce a positivist approach to the diverse source material (cf. section 1.2 n. 13 above) giving the false impression that there was a unified system that authors adopted wholesale.

[21] See Sluiter (2010) 30–36 for the ancient conception of language and literature as resembling bodies or organisms. Iodice di Martino (1986) 26–27 offers a list of passages from Cicero's rhetorical works in which the author applies the metaphor of the human body to oratory. Dugan (2005) 270–279 shows that 'the body is the underlying metaphor that governs the *Orator*'s discourse on style'.

[22] For the flowery style, cf. Cicero's conception of the middle style: see section 3.2.2, esp. n. 46 below.

	'Types of diction' (χαρακτῆρες τῆς λέξεως) Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 1–34	'Types of arrangement' (χαρακτῆρες τῆς συνθέσεως) Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 21–24, *Dem.* 35–52
1	λέξις **λιτή, ἀφελής** (smooth, plain), **ἰσχνή** (thin)	σύνθεσις **γλαφυρά** (smooth, polished)
2	λέξις **μικτή** (mixed), **σύνθετος** (compounded), **μέση, μεταξύ** (intermediate)	σύνθεσις **εὔκρατος** (well-blended), **κοινή** (common), **μέση** (intermediate)
3	λέξις **ὑψηλή** (elevated), **περιττή** (extraordinary), **ἐξηλλαγμένη** (unusual)	σύνθεσις **αὐστηρά** (rough)

Table 2: Dionysius' terminology for the three styles

Quintilian's neat terminology may give the impression that there existed a uniform Greek and Latin three-style system. Yet, as the foregoing two tables illustrate, the sources from the first century BC display a rather diverse nomenclature: apparently, ancient critics and rhetoricians did not simply subscribe to a standard doctrine, but they could adopt and adapt the three-style formula according to their own preferences. Varro, the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero and Dionysius do not only apply various adjectives to each of the three styles, but their adjectives are also governed by different nouns. *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, for instance, distinguishes between 'types' (*figurae*) and sometimes 'kinds' (*genera*). In his *Orator*, Cicero applies the attributes to the orators themselves, although he also refers to 'types' (*figurae*) and 'kinds' (*genera*) elsewhere.[23] Dionysius, lastly, has not one, but two systems of stylistic 'types' (χαρακτῆρες), one of which covers word selection, or diction (λέξις), while the other is concerned with word arrangement, or composition (σύνθεσις). The types of arrangement are also called the three 'harmonies' (ἁρμονίαι).[24] The Latin three-style systems, conversely, comprehensively address all parts of style—selection, arrangement and figures of speech.[25]

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[23] *Rhet. Her.* 4.11: 'There are, then, three kinds of style, which we call types' (*sunt igitur tria genera, quae genera nos figuras appellamus*). Note that the term *figurae* for 'figures of speech' (Greek σχήματα) is used for the first time in Quint. *Inst. orat*: Cicero refers to figures as *lumina* (e.g. *De or.* 3.205) and *Rhet. Her.* uses *exornationes* (e.g. 4.18). As for Cicero's terminology for the three styles, *De or.* 3.177 has *genus*, while he uses *figura* at ibid. 3.199 and 3.212. In *Orat.*, however, Cicero rather distinguishes between three types of orator: see e.g. *Orat.* 69, 100. On Gellius' account of Varro's threefold division, see section 3.1 n. 1, and section 3.3 n. 51.

[24] Artés Hernández (2013) thinks that the terms λέξις and λόγος are often interchangeable in Dionysius' works, both referring to style in general: he argues that Dionysius represents an intermediate stage between Philodemus

3.2.1 Malleable Dichotomies: the Stylistic Extremes

All extant articulations of the three-style formula are built on the notion of two stylistic extremes—one plain and unadorned, the other grand and ornate. The third style is usually imagined as intermediate between these stylistic extremities. The author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, for one, calls the two opposites 'thin' (*adtenuata*) and 'heavy' (*gravis*), adding that both of these forms can degenerate into 'neighboring faulty styles' (*finitima et propinqua vitia*): the thin style is akin to the vicious 'meagre' type (*exilis*), while the heavy style can easily become 'swollen' (*sufflata*). Incidentally, as we will see (section 3.2.2), the 'intermediate' style (*mediocris*) is akin to the so-called 'slack' style (*fluctuans*). Interestingly, the author supplies self-written samples for the three virtuous types and their kindred vicious types, a clear demonstration of the practical applicability of ancient stylistic theory: for this reason, the section in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* about the three styles has been called a 'textbook in Latin prose composition'.[26] Setting aside the discussion in the anonymous treatise, the present subsection will take a closer look at the formulations of the stylistic extremes in the works of Cicero and Dionysius.

Like the anonymous author, Cicero uses the antithetical pair 'thin' (*tenuis*) and 'heavy' (*gravis*). Unlike the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, however, Cicero adds moral descriptions to each of the stylistic types: as we have seen (table 1), he considers the orator of

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(who still favors λέξις) and Hermogenes and Longinus (who rather use λόγος). Yet, as we will see in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 below, Dionysius' λέξις often (e.g. *Lys.* 8.2), though not always (e.g. *Comp.* 3.1), refers specifically to word selection. On Dionysius' terminology for the types of arrangement, see Pohl (1968) 1–11: the terms 'arrangement' (σύνθεσις) and 'harmony' (ἁρμονία) not only evoke architectural imagery (ἁρμόζω means 'to join'), but also the acoustic, musical aspect of word arrangement. Cf. section 4.1 n. 7 below for earlier articulations of the theory of three types of word arrangement (Demetr. *Eloc.*, Philod. *Poem.*).

[25] See e.g. *Rhet. Her.* 4.11: the author notes that the grand style has 'impressive words' (*gravia verba*) as well as a 'smooth and ornate arrangement' (*levis et ornata constructio*). At ibid. 4.16, he adds that each type of style is embellished by appropriate figures of speech and thought. Likewise, Cic. *Orat.* 80 distinguishes between 'embellishment in single words' (*ornatus verborum simplicium*) and 'embellishment in word combination' (*ornatus verborum collocatorum*), which comprises both rhythmical word arrangement and figures of speech.

[26] Deneire (2004) provides a systematic discussion of the stylistic samples in *Rhet. Her.*, in each case reviewing word choice, rhythm, periodicity and other features. Deneire builds on the analyses of the same passages by Marouzeau (1921), Leeman (1963) 29–32 and Caplan (1969) 290–298. The notion of faulty styles can also be found in Demetr. *Eloc.*, who connects the 'frigid style' (τὸ ψυχρόν) to the grand type, and the 'arid style' (χαρακτὴρ ξηρός) to the simple style. Cf. Gell. *NA* 6.14.5, who associates 'pompous and bombastic speakers' (*sufflati atque tumidi*) with grandeur, 'filthy and barren speakers' (*squalentes et ieiuni*) with simplicity, and 'unclear and ambiguous speakers' (*incerti et ambigui*) with the middle style: cf. section 3.3 n. 51 below.

the thin style 'calm' (*submissus*) and 'astute' (*callidus*), whereas he regards the orator of the heavy style as 'passionate' (*vehemens*), and the orator of the intermediate style 'modest' (*modicus*) and 'temperate' (*temperatus*). Cicero's diverse terminology reflects the variety of applications that he assigns to the three styles: according to the rhetorician, each of the three registers can be connected to subject matter, to various discourse functions and to the specific part of the speech. Thus, Cicero fits the theory of three styles neatly into other important parts of his rhetorical system. In each case, the guiding principle is 'appropriateness' (τὸ πρέπον, *decorum*).[27]

	Plain style	Intermediate style	Grand style
Subject matter	*humilia, parva*	*mediocria, modica*	*alta, magna*
Discourse function	*probare*	*delectare*	*flectere*
Part of the speech	*narratio, argumentatio*	*exordium*	*peroratio*

Table 3: The three styles within Cicero's rhetorical system

First of all, Cicero relates the three styles to subject matter: the grand style is suited for 'lofty' and 'grand topics' (*alta, magna*), the plain style for 'low' and 'small issues' (*humilia, parva*), and the intermediate style for 'subjects that range in between' (*mediocria, modica*).[28] Additionally, he associates the stylistic registers with a triad of discourse functions, or 'tasks of the orator' (*officia oratoris*), viz., 'proving, entertaining and swaying' (*probare, delectare, flectere*): 'The plain style is for proof (*in probando*), the moderate style for entertainment (*in delectando*), and the grand style for swaying (*in flectendo*).'[29] These three discourse functions should not be confused with the three modes of persuasion, that Cicero expounds in his *De Oratore*, i.e., 'teaching, conciliating and moving' (*docere, conciliare, movere*).[30] Furthermore,

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[27] See esp. Cic. *Orat.* 70–74. Cicu (2000) discusses Cicero's adaptation of the term πρέπον into Latin and he explores both the ethical and the aesthetical meanings of the word *decorum* in Cicero's rhetorical and philosophical works.

[28] Cic. *Orat.* 100–101.

[29] Cic. *Orat.* 69: *subtile in probando, modicum in delectando, vehemens in flectendo.* The translation is mine. Cf. *Brut.* 194–198, *Opt. gen.* 3. Douglas (1957) notes that the identification of the three styles with three oratorical tasks is a Ciceronian innovation.

[30] Both the threefold formula of discourse functions from *Brut.*, *Orat.* and *Opt. gen.*, and the triple division of persuasion modes from *De or.* are referred to as 'tasks of the orator' (*officia oratoris*). The latter triad is articulated in *De or.* 2.115, 2.121, 2.128–129, 2.310 and 3.104; it can be connected to the Aristotelian πίστεις

the three styles can also be related to different parts of the speech: according to Cicero, the orator should use the moderate style in his introductions, he should speak simply and calmly throughout his narrations and argumentations, and he should inflame the passion of the listeners in his perorations.[31] In a word, while *Rhetorica ad Herennium* simply applies the widely used corporeal metaphor in order to differentiate between the simple and grand style, Cicero adds a moral terminology so as to fit his three styles into the larger framework of his rhetorical program of 46 BC.

Dionysius, next, has, as we have seen, two threefold systems instead of one comprehensive triple division (table 2). Dionysius' 'types of diction' (χαρακτῆρες τῆς λέξεως) are mostly concerned with selection of words: he describes one style as 'plain' or 'simple' (λιτός, ἀφελής, ἰσχνός), 'using only the commonest and the most familiar words', while he characterizes the opposite style as 'elevated' (ὑψηλός), 'extraordinary' (περιττός) and 'unusual' (ἐξηλλαγμένος), 'using archaic, poetical or recondite vocabulary'.[32] The names of the latter style are somewhat ambivalent: whereas the term ὑψηλός has a predominantly positive connotation, περιττός can often be translated in such negative English adjectives as 'superfluous', 'excessive' or 'extravagant'. The word ἐξηλλαγμένος, in addition, can mean 'strange' and even 'degenerate'.[33] The choice of terminology reflects Dionysius' hesitant

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from the second book of *Rh.* (λόγος, ἦθος, πάθος). Wisse (1989) 212–220 expounds the distinction between the formulas *probare, delectare, flectere* and *docere, conciliare, movere*: 'The division of *De Oratore* is primarily concerned with content, that in *Orator* with style and its effect on the audience.' Sluiter (1994), however, points out that the two divisions are not wholly incompatible. At any rate, Wisse rightly rejects the identification of the three oratorical tasks in *De or.* with the three styles, as 'the three styles, which are connected with the three tasks in *Orator*, only play a minor part in *De Oratore*, and are not in any way connected with the three *pisteis*.' See also Calboli Montefusco (1994), who addresses the difference between the ideas of 'conciliating' (*conciliare*) and 'entertaining' (*delectare*). Sluiter (1999) 258–260 shows that August. *Doctr. christ.* 4.32 also distinguishes between the two sets of tasks, one concerning modes of persuasion, the other addressing discourse functions.

[31] Cic. *Orat.* 122.

[32] The larger phrases are quoted from Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 4.1, which discusses the style of Lysianic qualities of the style of Isocrates: Οὔτε γὰρ ἀρχαίοις οὔτε πεποιημένοις οὔτε γλωττηματικοῖς ὀνόμασιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς κοινοτάτοις καὶ συνηθεστάτοις κέχρηται. Cf. ibid. 8, which compares the simple type with the elevated type of diction in similar words. The ambiguity of the term λέξις (both 'diction' and 'style') has allowed many scholars to interpret Dionysius' χαρακτῆρες τῆς λέξεως as types of style, that is, not limited to word selection alone: see e.g. Usher (1974) 235–237, Aujac (1988) 16–24, Innes (1989) 269, Wooten (1989) 576 and De Jonge (2008) 180. Yet, Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 1–34 focuses specifically on selection of words. Cf. n. 24 above on Artés Hernández (2013).

[33] For the negative connotations of περιττός and ἐξηλλαγμένος, see LSJ s. περισσός A.II and ibid. s. ἐξαλλάσσω. Both terms carry positive as well as negative connotations in literary criticism. Arist. *Pol.* 2.3.3, for instance,

attitude toward the elevated type of diction: he repeatedly censures the authors who turn to this style for the obscure, far-fetched and unnatural language (section 3.5). He describes the plain style, by contrast, as clear, realistic and resembling natural speech.[34] To be brief, Dionysius principal criterion for distinguishing between his two extreme types of diction is the familiarity of the language.

The 'types of arrangement' (χαρακτῆρες τῆς συνθέσεως) are differentiated according to the acoustic qualities of the word combinations and sentence structure (sections 4.3 and 4.4): on one side of the stylistic spectrum, the arrangement of the words is said to yield a 'smooth harmony' (ἁρμονία γλαφυρά), while the opposite style is thought to yield a 'rough harmony' (ἁρμονία αὐστηρά). It should be no surprise that the three types of arrangement do not correspond neatly to the three types of diction, as the two divisions address different aspects of style. The plain type of diction, for instance, does not necessarily correspond to the smooth style of arrangement: the former is described as natural, but the latter is often presented as artificial. Dionysius describes elevated diction, conversely, as unnatural, whereas he presents rough arrangement as simple and unaffected.[35] Still, Dionysius analyzes his three

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attributes 'strikingness' (τὸ περιττόν) as a stylistic virtue to Plato's Socratic dialogues, but Long. *Subl.* 3.4 connects it to 'frigidity' (ψυχρότης). The verb ἐξαλλάσσω usually refers to deviations from the common, everyday usage of words and phrase: it is used pejoratively in Arist. *Rh.* 3.3.3, where it is associated with frigidity (ψυχρότης), but Arist. *Poet.* 22.1458a21–22 connects it with 'dignified style' (λέξις σεμνή). The perfect participle ἐξηλλαγμένος refers to the result of the procedure of varying common language, i.e., a style with strange and uncommon words and phrases: see e.g. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 9.5.

[34] De Jonge (2008) 223–240 shows that the concept of the 'natural' (τὸ φυσικόν) is central throughout Dionysius' discussions of style: in his later works, the critic 'develops a more effective way of analyzing the exact character of what he regards as natural (and unnatural) style, syntax and word order' by turning to a grammatical framework and the method of metathesis. Cf. section 3.3 on the authors that represent the simple (natural) and elevated (unnatural) types of style. In section 3.5, we will see that Dionysius criticizes Plato and Isocrates, two authors whom he associates with the mixed type of diction, especially for their application of the elevated style, while he tends to praise their interpretation of simple diction: cf. esp. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 4–7.

[35] On the artificiality of smooth arrangement, see Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 23.3 and 23.7; on the natural appearance of rough arrangement, see ibid. 22.4–5. Pohl (1968) 22–46 expounds the differences between Dionysius' types of diction and his types of arrangement: see also Bonner (1939) 24, Grube (1974) 78 and Reid (1996) 49–55. In section 3.3 (esp. table 7) below, we will see that Dionysius may associate a classical author with one type of diction, but with a wholly different type of arrangement: Isocrates, for instance, is thought to represent the mixed style of diction and the smooth style of arrangement. Lysias, again, is Dionysius' paradigm for plain diction, but he does not feature in his discussion of the types of arrangement: Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 8.4 calls Lysias' arrangement 'simple' (ἀφελής) in accordance with his style of diction. Still, there is some overlap between the two divisions: Thucydides, for instance, represents both elevated diction and rough arrangement. Cf. section 3.3 below.

types of diction according to similar criteria as his three types of arrangement. The Greek scholar connects both these threefold divisions to his system of stylistic virtues: the table below gives an outline of this system, which distinguishes between so-called 'essential virtues' (ἀναγκαῖαι ἀρεταί) and 'additional virtues' (ἐπίθετοι ἀρεταί).[36] In his *Letter to Pompeius* and *On Thucydides*, Dionysius offers the following division of stylistic virtues in these two categories.[37]

'Essential virtues' (ἀναγκαῖαι ἀρεταί)	'Additional virtues' (ἐπίθετοι ἀρεταί)
1. Purity of language (τὸ καθαρόν) 2. Clarity (τὸ σαφές) 3. Brevity (συντομία)	1. Vividness (ἐνάργεια) 2. Portrayal of characters and emotions (ἠθῶν τε καὶ παθῶν μίμησις) 3. Grandeur (μέγα, μεγαλοπρέπεια), impressiveness (θαυμαστόν), sublimity (ὕψος), beautiful language (καλλιρρημοσύνη), dignified speech (σεμνολογία) 4. Power, forcefulness (ἰσχύς, δεινότης), intensity (τόνος), gravity (βάρος), emotion which rouses the mind (πάθος διεγεῖρον τὸν νοῦν), powerful and combative spirit (ἐρρωμένον καὶ ἐναγώνιον ῥεῦμα) 5. Persuasion (πειθώ), pleasure (ἡδονή), delight (τέρψις), charm (χάρις) 6. Appropriateness (τὸ πρέπον)

Table 4: Dionysius' system of stylistic virtues (*Thuc.* 23.6–7, *Pomp.* 3.8–10)

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[36] For discussions of Dionysius' system of stylistic virtues and its relationship with other (earlier) theories about stylistic virtues in Aristotle, Theophrastus and Stoic sources, see Stroux (1912) 72–88, Meerwaldt (1920) 3–26 and Bonner (1939) 16–20. Dionysius' complex system, then, seems to have been a later development in the history of rhetoric, but it is unlikely that it was his own invention: at *Thuc.* 22.2, Dionysius submits that the division 'has been laid out by many authors before' (εἴρηται πολλοῖς πρότερον). On several occasions, Cicero gives expression to the view that all oratory should exhibit certain essential virtues (e.g. pure Latin, clarity), while praise and admiration are reserved for those orators who master the more complex, additional virtues (e.g. rhythm, appropriateness): see *Part. or.* 31–32, *De or.* 3.38, 3.52–54, *Brut.* 261. Thus, Cicero may have been aware of a system of necessary and additional virtues, but he does not offer a full-blown exposition.

[37] See Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 22–23 and *Pomp.* 3.8–10. It is the Greek critic himself who suggests the division of additional virtues into the six subcategories presented in table 4.

In what way does this complex system of stylistic virtues contribute to our understanding of Dionysius' types of diction and types of arrangement? The attributes that the critic ascribes to simple and to elevated diction, as well as those that he ascribes to smooth and rough arrangement can be divided into a necessary and an additional category. He associates simple diction, for one, with 'what is necessary and useful' (τἀναγκαῖα καὶ χρήσιμα), while he often refers to the virtues of elevated diction as 'additional ornaments' (ἐπίθετοι κόσμοι).[38] The table below presents a (non-exhaustive) list of attributes that Dionysius applies to both extreme styles of word selection. The two groups of adjectives below correspond roughly, though not perfectly, with Dionysius' division between necessary and additional virtues, that we have seen above (table 4).[39]

Attributes of simple diction	Attributes of elevated diction
Simple (λιτός, ἁπλοῦς, ἀφελής)	Elevated (ὑψηλός)
Ordinary (ἀπέριττος, συνήθης, κοινός)	Unusual (περιττός, ἐξηλλαγμένος, ξένος)
Sweet (ἡδύς)	Bitter (πικρός)
Cheerful (ἱλαρός)	Solemn (σεμνός)
Uncontrived (ἀποίητος, ἀνεπιτήδευτος)	Artificial (ἐγκατάσκευος, ἐπιτήδειος)
Real, practical (ἀληθινός)	Ceremonial (πανηγυρικός)
Safe (ἀσφαλής, ἀκίνδυνος)	Daring, risky (τολμηρός)
Relaxed (ἀνειμένος)	Intense (σύντονος)
Displaying moral character (ἠθικός)	Arousing emotion (παθητικός)
Pure (καθαρός)	Weighty (βαρύς)
Clear (σαφής)	Rough (αὐστηρός)
Concise (σύντομος)	Beautiful (καλός)
Persuasive (πιθανός)	Dignified (ἀξιωματικός)
Accurate (ἀκριβής)	Grand (μεγαλοπρεπής)

Table 5: attributes of simple and elevated diction (Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 1–34)

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[38] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 3.2. Cf. ibid. 1.3, 13.7 and 18.1.

[39] The virtues can be found throughout *Dem.* 1–34, the first half of the treatise. For the sake of uniformity I have included only adjectives in the table, although one can easily find related nouns in *Dem.* (e.g. μεγαλοπρέπεια, τόνος): I have used the nominative singular masculine forms of the adjectives, regardless of the forms in which they actually appear in Dionysius' text. Concerning the apparent differences between tables 4 and 5, cf. Porter (2016) 221 and section 1.5 n. 72 above on the 'provisional nature' of Dionysius' theoretical schemas.

Dionysius has a similar division of virtues in his discussion of the types of arrangement. In *On the Arrangement of Words*, he recognizes two main virtues to differentiate between the opposite styles of word arrangement, 'pleasure' (ἡδονή) for smooth harmony and 'beauty' (κάλλος) for rough harmony. The Greek author subsequently offers two concise lists of virtues that fall under these two categories.[40] As we can see in the table below, the division quite neatly (albeit, again, not completely) matches Dionysius' system of necessary and additional virtues (table 4) and his description of simple and elevated diction (table 5).

Attributes of smooth arrangement	Attributes of rough arrangement
Pleasure (ἡδονή)	Beauty (κάλλος)
Freshness (ὥρα)	Weight (βάρος)
Charm (χάρις)	Grandeur (μεγαλοπρέπεια)
Euphony (εὐστομία)	Solemnity (σεμνολογία)
Sweetness (γλυκύτης)	Dignity (ἀξίωμα)
Persuasiveness (τὸ πιθανόν)	Emotion (πάθος)

Table 6: attributes of smooth and rough arrangement (Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 11.2–3)

Simple diction is characterized by the same sort of virtues as smooth harmony, and elevated diction is described in a similar vocabulary as rough harmony. Like Cicero, Dionysius fits his views on stylistic registers into the larger framework of his literary doctrines: while the Roman rhetorician had connected his discussion of the three styles to his theory of the orator's tasks, the Greek critic links each of his threefold divisions to his theory of stylistic virtues. The malleability of the three-style doctrine allows our authors to adapt it so as to incorporate it into the overarching stylistic program of their rhetorical and critical treatises.

3.2.2 The Flexibility of the Middle Style

In the previous subsection, we have seen that our sources use various antitheses as guiding principles for their stylistic divisions—thin vs. heavy, calm vs. passionate, ordinary vs.

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[40] See Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 10.1–2 for the virtues of beauty and pleasure, and ibid. 11.2–3 for the virtues associated with the two cardinal virtues. The opposition between 'beauty' (κάλλος, τὸ καλόν) and 'pleasure' (ἡδονή, τὸ ἡδύ) is essential in Dionysius' critical treatises, esp. in his discussions of word arrangement. Donadi (1986) argues that the distinction is a Dionysian innovation, while Goudriaan (1989) 203–215 connects the division to the author's views on politics and civilization. Cf. section 2.3.3 n. 84 above and esp. section 4.5 below on the role of beauty and pleasure in Dionysius' evaluation of word arrangement.

unusual, smooth vs. rough. The present subsection will focus on the extant interpretations of the intervening type of style that is somehow situated between these extremes. In Latin sources, this intermediate style holds a middle between the two extremes, but the rhetoricians do not explain how exactly this middle ground is related to the other two styles. According to the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, the intermediate style 'consists of a lower (viz., than the grand style), yet not of the lowest and most colloquial class of words'.[41] The author highlights the indefinite character of this style, when he introduces the vicious neighboring style, which he calls the 'slack style' (*figura dissoluta*) and which 'drifts to and fro' (*fluctuat huc et illuc*), being utterly 'without sinews and joints' (*sine nervis et articulis*).[42] Precisely because the mean is such a vague concept, the adept of the middle style runs the risk of composing a vague discourse.

Cicero agrees with the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* about the vagueness of the middle style: 'It is akin to both other style, excelling in neither, sharing in both, or, to tell the truth, sharing in neither.'[43] According to Cicero, it does not possess the 'sharp edge' (*acumen*) of the simple style nor the forceful 'thunder' (*fulmen*) of the grand style: consequently, it has an 'absolute minimum of vigor' (*nervorum vel minimum*). Yet, Cicero submits that this floating style has its own merits: it makes up for its lack of force by supplying an 'absolute maximum of charm' (*suavitatis vel plurimum*).[44] In his *Orator*, Cicero associates the middle style particularly with the relaxed joy of epideictic oratory: in his view, the middle style is not

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[41] *Rhet. Her.* 4.11: *Constat ex humiliore neque tamen ex infima et pervulgatissima verborum dignitate.* Cf. ibid. 4.13, which considers any given discourse to belong to the middle style, 'if we have somewhat relaxed our style, and yet have not descended to the most ordinary prose' (*si haec aliquantum demiserimus neque tamen ad infimum descenderimus*).

[42] *Rhet. Her.* 4.16. Cf. Gell. *NA* 6.14.5, who calls the orators who are unsuccessful in composing a discourse of the middle style 'unclear and ambiguous' (*incerti et ambigui*). Cf. section 3.2.1, esp. n. 26 above on the faulty styles in *Rhet. Her.*, Demetr. *Eloc.* and Gell. *NA*. For the phrase 'without sinews' (*sine nervis*), cf. Cic. *Orat.* 91. See also the description of the middle style in *Rhet. Her.* by Leeman (1963) 30: it 'is mainly characterised by what it is not. It does not have the pathos of the *grandis figura*, nor the naked simplicity of the *figura attenuata*. What remains is a pleasant and relaxed loftiness.' The notions of pleasure and relaxation accord well with Cicero's interpretation of the middle style: see the next paragraph below.

[43] Cic. *Orat.* 21: *Vicinus amborum, in neutro excellens, utriusque particeps vel utriusque, si verum quaerimus, potius expers.* Cf. Winterbottom (1989) 127: the middle style is a 'colourless half-way house'.

[44] See Cic. *Orat.* 21 (*acumen, fulmen*) and ibid. 91: 'In this style there is perhaps a minimum of vigor and a maximum of charm' (*hoc in genere nervorum vel minimum, suavitatis autem est vel plurimum*). Cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4.16: 'Without sinews and joints' (*sine nervis et articulis*). On lightning as a productive symbol for grand oratory in general and for Demosthenes in particular in Cicero's works, see section 2.3.2 above.

indigenous to the Forum, but 'the sophists are the source (*e sophistarum fontibus*) from which all this has flowed into the Forum (*defluxit in forum*), but scorned by the simple and rejected by the grand, it found a resting-place in this middle class (*in mediocritate*) of which I am speaking'.[45] Cicero presents the pleasant oratory of Demetrius of Phalerum as the paradigm of the intermediate style: the Peripatetic scholar 'came forth in the sun and dust of action, not as from a soldier's tent, but from the shady retreat (*ex umbraculis*) of the great philosopher Theophrastus' (section 3.3).[46]

Dionysius has a rather different conception of the intermediate style than his Roman predecessors: on some occasions, the Greek critic describes it, like Cicero and the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, as 'intermediary' (μέσος, μεταξύ) between the two extreme styles, but at other times he proposes that it is a 'mixture' (μῖγμα), a 'blend' (κρᾶσις) or a 'combination' (σύνθεσις) of them. As we will see, Dionysius' middle style is actually nothing more than an appropriate application of the extreme styles, that is, of both simple and elevated diction, of both smooth and rough arrangement—in a word, of both the essential and the additional virtues. Indeed, the middle style 'has no form peculiar to itself'.[47] Dionysius' interpretation of the stylistic mean merits a closer look, not only because of the apparently

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[45] Cic. *Orat.* 96: *Hoc totum e sophistarum fontibus defluxit in forum, sed spretum a subtilibus, repulsum a gravibus in ea de qua loquor mediocritate consedit.* Cicero draws a contrast between the practical force of the simple and grand style on the one hand and the relaxed entertainment associated with the middle style: cf. section 2.3.1 n. 44 above on the frequently attested association of practical oratory with military weapons and the bodies of soldiers, and of epideictic oratory with ceremonial weapons and the bodies of athletes. Winterbottom (1989) argues that Cicero's conflation of the middle style with epideictic oratory serves as an apology for the epideictic elements in his own oratory. The connections between Cicero's middle style and epideictic oratory are expounded by Von Albrecht (2003) 19–20.

[46] Cic. *Brut.* 37: *Processerat enim in solem et pulverem, non ut e militari tabernaculo, sed ut e Theophrasti doctissimi hominis umbraculis.* For Demetrius of Phalerum, see section 1.6 n. 128 above (on the transition from Attic to Asian oratory) and section 3.3 below (on Demetrius' middle style). Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.58 may have Cicero's discussion in mind in his description of the middle style as 'flowery' (*genus floridum*).

[47] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 41.1: 'There is no quality peculiar to itself' (οὐδείς ἐστι χαρακτὴρ ἴδιος). Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 24.1: 'It has no form peculiar to itself' (σχῆμα ἴδιον οὐδὲν ἔχει). On the necessary and additional virtues in the mixed style of diction, see *Dem.* 3.2. Martinho (2010) studies the terminology that Dionysius uses for the middle style, focusing particularly on the concept of mixture. Yunis (2019) refers to this concept as Dionysius' 'most interesting and effective idea for rhetorical style'. Cf. section 3.5 below for the two different forms of mixture (μῖγμα) that Dionysius introduces in his works, that is, blending (κρᾶσις) and combining (σύνθεσις). Note that the idea of mixing appears rarely in other critical texts: Demetr. *Eloc.* 36 (μίγνυται) and Cic. *Orat.* 21 (*temperatus*, cf. OLD s. *tempero,* 'mingle in due proportion') briefly touch on it, without further elaboration.

ambiguous terminology of mixing, blending and combining, but even more so because Dionysius identifies the middle style as the best possible style, not a bland mean, but rather a formidable blend of the best qualities of the other styles. In a later part of this chapter, I will therefore address Dionysius' peculiar conception of the middle and his reasons for proclaiming it the best (section 3.5).

Thus, the Greek and Latin sources do not only exhibit various approaches to the two binary opposed styles that form the basis of their threefold divisions, but their views also differ considerably with respect to the intermediate style, which lies between the extremities. While the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Cicero portray it as a vague mean which lacks vigor and which, in Cicero's view, is mainly designed to entertain, Dionysius' middle style unites all the best features of the other two styles. To the Greek scholar, the mixed style, far from being weak, is the 'most powerful' (κράτιστος) of the three available registers.[48]

3.3 Classicism and the Three Styles

The theory of three styles is closely connected to the classicizing approach to style that was in vogue in the first century BC: as Roman and Greek authors alike studied the literary models of classical Greece with increasing intensity, the theory of three styles came to be used as a convenient, versatile tool to analyze, categorize and compare the classics.[49] Although the theory of three styles was especially influential in rhetorical theory, other genres could also be studied within its framework: Dionysius applies his three types of word arrangement, for instance, to epic, lyric, tragedy as well as to rhetoric, history and philosophy.[50] Furthermore, the three styles could not only be applied to Greek but also to Latin literature: we know that the Roman polymath Varro proposed Latin examples for each of the three styles: he attributed a grand style to the tragic poet Pacuvius, an intermediate style to the comic playwright Terence, and a plain style to the satirist Lucilius.[51] In this section, I will focus on the

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[48] See Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 15.1 and 34.5 on the superiority of the middle type of diction, and *Comp.* 24.2 on Dionysius' view that the middle type of arrangement carries off the 'first prize' (τὰ πρωτεῖα).

[49] For an introduction to classicism and the shared approach to classical Greek literature by Greek and Roman authors in Rome, see section 1.6 above and the secondary literature cited there.

[50] Cf. n. 60 below for the Dionysius' division of ancient Greek poetry according to his three types of word arrangement. See also Gell. *NA* 6.14.1: 'Both in verse and in prose there are three approved styles' (*et in carmine et in soluta oratione genera dicendi probabilia sunt tria*).

[51] Gell. *NA* 6.14.6 (= Varro fr. 80 Wilmanns) credits Varro with the view that the tragedies of Pacuvius displays 'abundance' (*ubertas*), the comedies of Terence a 'middle style' (*mediocritas*), and the satires of Lucilius 'slenderness' (*gracilitas*). These associations are clearly made on account of the genres rather than the styles that

application of the three-style doctrine in the analysis of classical Greek prose: I will specifically compare the lists of authors that Cicero and Dionysius supply as exemplary models for each of the registers in their stylistic divisions.

First of all, however, it is worthwhile to notice that the critics and rhetoricians in Rome traced the invention of the triple stylistic division itself back to the classical past: various Greek and Latin authors connected the three styles to pivotal moments in the history of both Greek and Latin rhetoric. Many considered Homer's *Iliad* to be such a watershed: the old poet was not only generally held to have been the founding father of rhetoric in general, but he was also thought to have been the first to formulate the theory of three styles.[52] Indeed, various sources state that Homer assigned a plain style to Menelaus, an elevated style to Odysseus, and an intermediate style to Nestor.[53] The poet described Menelaus, for one, as speaking 'concisely but very clearly' (παῦρα μὲν ἀλλὰ μάλα λιγέως): 'He was not a man of many words, nor did he not speak at random' (οὐ πολύμυθος οὐδ' ἀφαμαρτοεπής). Odysseus, conversely, was impressive: 'His words were like snowflakes on a winter's day' (ἔπεα

are peculiar to the authors themselves: tragedy is grand, satire is simple, and comedy holds a mean between the former two genres. It is by no means certain that Varro ever applied the Latin terms *ubertas, gracilitas* and *mediocritas*. At any rate, Gellius does not attribute his entire discussion of the three styles to Varro: the latter is not mentioned, for instance, when Gellius introduces the Greek and Latin names for the three styles, viz., ἀδρός/*uber* ('rich'), ἰσχνός/*gracilis* ('thin') and μέσος/*mediocris* ('intermediate'), and the corresponding erroneous styles (cf. n. 26 above). Grube (1965) 163 notes that, 'if Gellius is quoting correctly, Varro's was the first extant example of the use of the three-style formula'. Cf. section 3.1 n. 1 above.

[52] According to Sluiter (2005) 392–396, the rhetoricians' interest in Homer's epics was threefold: (1) rhetoric could be 'found back' in Homer, for which the attribution of the three styles to three Homeric heroes is a clear example, (2) rhetorical analysis could be applied to the exegesis of Homeric passages, and (3) Homeric rhetoric could be used as textbook material in the education of orators. Recently, Ahern Knudsen (2014) 1–14 has argued that 'a latent theory of rhetoric exists in Homer': she recognizes thirty-five 'rhetorical speeches' in Hom. *Il.*, arguing that they display techniques of persuasion similar to the ones advocated in Arist. *Rh.*

[53] Cf. section 3.1 n. 7 above. Radermacher (1951) 6–9 gives a list of sources that connect the three styles to Homer: see esp. Cic. *Brut.* 40, 50; *Laus Pisonis* 57–64; Sen. *Ep.* 40.2; Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.64; Gell. *NA* 6.14.5; Fronto *De eloc.* 1.5; [Plut.] *Vit. Hom.* 172; Hermog. *Id.* 2.9 Rabe; Aristid. *In Plat. de rhet.* p. 30–31 Dindorf; Eust. *Il.* 3.212. Cf. Nünlist (2009) 220 on schol. AbT *Il.* 3.212. Although Cicero is the earliest extant source for the attribution of stylistic registers to Homeric heroes, it is often suggested that the topic of the three styles of rhetoric in Homer goes back to at least the fourth century BC: Yet, Kennedy (1957a) 26–29 rightly notes that references to Homeric rhetoric in Pl. *Phdr.* 261b and Antisthenes (ap. Porph. *Schol. Od.* 1.1) do not refer to stylistic divisions: 'The topic is, therefore, primarily one of the Hellenistic age, and it is to that period and its schools that we must now turn.' Given the provenance of the surviving texts, I submit that the issue was primarily one of Greek and Roman critics in Rome, as was the whole three-style division: cf. section 3.1.

νιφάδεσσιν ἐοικότα χειμερίῃσιν). Nestor's style, lastly, was 'pleasant' (ἡδυεπής): from his lips came forth a voice 'sweeter than honey' (μέλιτος γλυκίων).[54] Homer, then, was widely held to have been the inventor of the theory of three styles.

The threefold doctrine, in addition, was not only associated with the birth of rhetoric in Greece, but also with its arrival in Rome. In 155 BC, an Athenian embassy visited Rome to negotiate with the senate about the reduction of a fine that had been imposed on the Athenians.[55] Among the envoys were three famous philosophers, Carneades from the Academy, Critolaus the Peripatetic and Diogenes the Stoic, who beside their official duties in the senate also gave public displays of their eloquence. According to Aulus Gellius, the philosophers each represented one of the three canonical styles: 'Carneades spoke with a vehemence that carried you away (*violenta et rapida*), Critolaus with art and polish (*scita et teretia*), Diogenes with restraint and sobriety (*modesta et sobria*).'[56] Thus, the Platonist stands for the elevated style, the Aristotelian for the middle style, and the Stoic for the plain style.[57]

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[54] See Hom. *Il.* 3.212–224 (Menelaus and Odysseus) and ibid. 1.247–249 (Nestor); translations are mine.

[55] The embassy was famous in Antiquity because of the rhetorical displays of the participating Greek philosophers and the ambivalent reactions that they evoked from the Romans: see esp. Powell (2013b), who discusses the sources and concludes that 'in reality the embassy may not have been such an iconic moment for the Roman encounter with Greek philosophy as it is usually supposed to have been, until Cicero made it so'. The main ancient sources are Cic. *De or.* 2.155–161, Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 22, Plin. *NH* 7.112, Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.1.35, Gell. *NA* 6.14.8–10, Lactant. *Div. inst.* 5.14.3–5. In fact, Greek and Roman authors associated various supposed key moments in the history of rhetoric and grammar with foreign embassies. Gorgias' visit to Athens in 427 BC as an envoy of his native town Leontini, for instance, was sometimes considered to have been the starting point of artificial prose in Athens: see e.g. Diod. Sic. 12.53.4 and Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 3.3 (= Timaeus F137 Jacoby). For Gorgias as the inventor of artificial prose, see Cic. *Orat.* 39–40, 165, 175. Likewise, Suet. *Gramm.* 2.1–4 reports that Crates of Mallos gave the first impulse to the study of grammar and criticism in Rome, while he visited the city as an envoy of the Attalid court in 168 BC: see section 4.2, esp. n. 18 below.

[56] Gell. *NA* 6.14.8–10: *Violenta et rapida Carneades dicebat, scita et teretia Critolaus, modesta Diogenes et sobria*. The words that Gellius uses do not appear in *Rhet. Her.*, Cic. or Quint. *Inst. orat.* to describe the three styles: hence, Gellius supplies another illustration of the versatility of the theory of three styles. The author's claim that Polybius and Rutilius Rufus are his sources is very dubious: see n. 58 below.

[57] The distribution of the three styles over the three philosophers tallies with the ancient reputations of Academy, Peripatos and Stoa: Plato, for one, is often associated with the elevated style (cf. e.g. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 5.4–6, Long. *Subl.* 4.6), while Aristotle and his followers famously advocated the mean (μεσότης) as the seat of virtue (cf., e.g., Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 24.2, section 3.5 below), and Stoic philosophers propagated a simple, concise type of rhetoric: cf. Moretti (1990). Diog. Laert. 7.59 credits the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon, one of the visitors of Rome in 155 BC, with the introduction of 'brevity' (συντομία) as the fifth cardinal stylistic virtue, in addition to correctness of language, clarity, appropriateness and ornamentation.

Gellius claims that he took the anecdote from Polybius and Rutilius Rufus, but it seems equally plausible that his source was the lost third book of Cicero's dialogue *On the Republic*, which also discussed the embassy.[58] In any case, the three styles are once again connected to an iconic moment in the history of rhetoric.

	Cicero	Dionysius	
	genera dicendi (e.g. *Brut.* 67–88, *Orat.* 15, 92, 111)	χαρακτῆρες τῆς λέξεως (*Dem.* 1–3)	χαρακτῆρες τῆς συνθέσεως (*Comp.* 22.7, 23.9, 24.5)
1	Lysias, Hyperides	Lysias	Isocrates, Ephorus, Theopompus
2	Demetrius of Phalerum	Thrasymachus, Isocrates, Plato, Demosthenes	Demosthenes, Herodotus, Democritus, Plato, Aristotle
3	Pericles, Demosthenes	Thucydides, Gorgias	Antiphon, Thucydides

Table 7: Cicero's and Dionysius' classifications of classical Greek prose according to the three styles

Needless to say, the theory of three styles was not primarily designed to compare Homeric heroes and philosophical delegates: it was more appositely put to use to analyze the divergent styles exhibited in the corpus of classical Greek literature. The table above lists the Greek prose authors that Cicero and Dionysius consider typical champions for each of the three styles. Naturally, Dionysius gives us two separate lists, one for the types of diction (simple, mixed and elevated respectively) and another for the types of arrangement (smooth, mixed and rough respectively): I have already explored the differences between these two divisions above (section 3.2.1). Cicero does not offer a comprehensive canon of authors: his references

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[58] Powell (2013) 243–244 points out that the third book of Cic. *Rep.* mentions Rutilius Rufus as a fictional intermediary through whom the dialogue was transmitted, and that Polybius is also mentioned in the same book: 'The mention of the two names together makes one wonder whether Gellius would have looked up both those sources separately and whether they both said the same thing, or whether he used one source which happened to mention them both.' It is not unlikely, surely, that the topic of rhetorical styles was of interest to Cicero in the period between 54 and 51 BC, when he was working on *Rep.*: see Zetzel (1995) 1–3.

to the authors and their styles are scattered over his three rhetorical works of 46 BC. Note that *Rhetorica ad Herennium* does not feature in the overview, as it does not connect the three styles to specific Greek or Latin authors: the anonymous rhetorician, as we have seen, rejects the 'practice of Greek writers' (*consuetudo Graecorum*) of drawing stylistic examples from famous orators or poets.[59] I have also omitted from the table above the poets that Dionysius connects to his three types of arrangement, as they cannot readily be compared to Cicero's list, which only refers to orators.[60]

In the simple style, both Cicero and Dionysius select Lysias as the principal model. In the same category, Dionysius inscribes 'the genealogists, those who dealt with local history, the natural philosophers and the moral philosophers, including the entire Socratic school (except for Plato) and almost all those who composed political and forensic speeches'.[61] Dionysius does not connect Lysias to any of his three types of harmony: he describes the orator's word arrangement as simple and seemingly spontaneous.[62] Cicero and Dionysius, to continue, select different authors as antipodes to Lysias' plain style. Cicero, for one, contrasts him with Pericles and Demosthenes, who were both thought, as we saw before, to display a thunderlike quality (section 2.3.2): Cicero repeats Aristophanes' statement that Pericles 'lightened, and thundered, and embroiled the whole of Greece', while he often refers to the 'thunderbolts' (*fulmina*) of Demosthenes.[63] Dionysius, however, pits the simple word choice

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[59] See *Rhet. Her.* 4.1–10: cf. section 1.4 above. On the author's self-written samples of the three styles and the neighboring vicious styles, see section 3.2.1 above, esp. n. 26.

[60] Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 22.7, 23.9 and 24.5 gives the following division of poets according to the three styles. Among the epic poets, Dionysius presents Antimachus and Empedocles as rough, Hesiod as smooth, and Homer is mixed. As for the lyric poets, he classifies Pindar as rough, Sappho, Anacreon and Simonides as smooth, and Stesichorus and Alcaeus as mixed. In tragedy, lastly, he puts forward Aeschylus as rough, Euripides as smooth, and Sophocles as mixed.

[61] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 2.2: Οἱ γενεαλογίας ἐξενέγκαντες καὶ οἱ τὰς τοπικὰς ἱστορίας πραγματευσάμενοι καὶ οἱ τὰ φυσικὰ φιλοσοφήσαντες καὶ οἱ τῶν ἠθικῶν διαλόγων ποιηταί, ὧν ἦν τὸ Σωκρατικὸν διδασκαλεῖον πᾶν ἔξω Πλάτωνος, καὶ οἱ τοὺς δημηγορικοὺς ἢ δικανικοὺς συνταττόμενοι λόγους ὀλίγου δεῖν πάντες.

[62] See Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 8.2, describing Lysias' arrangement as 'absolutely simple and plain' (ἀφελὴς πάνυ καὶ ἁπλοῦς). This description seems compatible with Dionysius' conception of rough harmony: at *Comp.* 22.5, the critic describes rough arrangement as 'artless' (ἀνεπιτήδευτος) and 'simple' (ἀφελής), cf. also section 4.5 below. Note, however, that Dion. Hal. *Din.* 6.4 connects Lysias' naturalness to smoothness, not roughness: his composition is 'apparently natural and smooth' (αὐτοφυὴς καὶ λεία εἶναι δοκοῦσα). It seems, then, that Lysias' style of arrangement cannot be easily fitted into Dionysius threefold system: cf. section 3.2.1 n. 35 above.

[63] For the frequently attested connections between thunderbolts and sublime literature, see section 2.3.2 n. 59. Cf. also ibid. for the ancient sources that link Pericles' oratory to thunder and lightning. The passage from

of Lysias against the elevated diction of Gorgias and Thucydides. Together with the orator Antiphon, Thucydides is also Dionysius' champion of rough arrangement, standing in opposition to the smooth harmony of Isocrates and his pupils Theopompus and Ephorus.[64] Thucydides, whose history is considered exemplary for elevated vocabulary and rough arrangement, is considered a typical adept of the additional virtues of style (section 3.2.1).

The authors that Cicero lists are all orators, whereas Dionysius includes historians (Theopompus, Ephorus, Herodotus, Thucydides) and philosophers (Democritus, Plato, Aristotle) as well as poets. The omission of all other prose authors except for orators in Cicero's discussion of the three styles is not arbitrary: the Roman rhetorician emphasizes that the styles of historiography and philosophy have no place on the Forum. The style of the philosophers, in his view, 'lacks the vigor and the sting necessary for oratorical efforts in public life'.[65] The historians, in addition, aim to achieve a 'calm and flowing style, not the terse and vigorous language of the Forum'. Apparently, Cicero deems the style of these two genres unfit for practical, everyday situations in the law-courts and the assemblies (section 2.3.4 and 2.4.4). Nonetheless, in the case of historiography, I think that Cicero would not be unhappy with Dionysius' division. Cicero calls Ephorus, for example, 'smooth' (*levis*), and he assigns to Theopompus a periodic style without hiatus, which tallies well with Dionysius' description of the smooth type of arrangement. Herodotus, in Cicero's view, 'flows along like a peaceful stream without any rough waters', whereas Thucydides 'moves with greater vigor, and in his description of war, he sounds, as it were, the trumpet of war'.[66]

Aristophanes is *Ach.* 530–531: 'And then in wrath Pericles, that Olympian, did lighten and thunder and stir up Greece' (ἐντεῦθεν ὀργῇ Περικλέης οὐλύμπιος / ἤστραπτ', ἐβρόντα, ξυνεκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα). According to Cic. *Orat.* 29, Aristophanes said 'that Pericles lightened, and thundered, and embroiled all Greece' (*fulgere, tonare permiscere Graeciam*).

[64] Cicero, too, associates Isocrates' school with smoothness. Cic. *Orat.* 151 attributes to Isocrates and Theopompus, for instance, the practice of avoiding hiatus, which is mentioned as a trademark of smooth word arrangement by Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 23.13. Cic. *Orat.* 191 calls Ephorus 'smooth' (*levis*). The Roman rhetorician, moreover, associates Isocrates, Ephorus and Theopompus repeatedly with carefully structured rhythmical periods: see e.g. *Orat.* 151, 172, 174, 191, 207, 218. Cf. also the next paragraph below.

[65] Cic. *Orat.* 62: *Horum oratio neque nervos neque aculeos oratorios ac forensis habet.* Ibid. 66: *In his tracta quaedam et fluens expetitur, non haec contorta et acris oratio.* Note that Cicero submits that some philosophers, specifically Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon and Theophrastus wrote 'ornately' (*ornate*) and could easily challenge the orators of the courts and the assemblies. For Dionysius' comparison of Plato's and Demosthenes' styles, see section 3.5 below.

[66] On Herodotus and Thucydides, see Cic. *Orat.* 39: *Alter enim sine ullis salebris quasi sedatus amnis fluit, alter incitatior fertur et de bellicis rebus canit etiam quodam modo bellicum.* The pleasantness of Herodotus' *sedatus*

Two names on Cicero's and Dionysius' lists deserve closer attention. The first is Demosthenes, who occupies a special place in all threefold divisions. As we saw, Cicero and Dionysius both think him superior to the other prose authors of Classical Greece, in any type of style (section 2.3.2–2.3.4). According to the Roman rhetorician, 'nobody is more impressive (*gravior*), nobody more astute (*callidior*), nobody more tempered (*temperatior*) than him'. Similarly, the Greek critic claims that Demosthenes was 'more successful than the other authors' in all three styles.[67] Thus, Cicero and Dionysius agree that Demosthenes does not pretend to any single style. For Dionysius, this makes the orator the consummate icon of the mixed style of diction and arrangement, which, after all, is nothing else than an appropriate combination of the best qualities of the other two styles. According to Cicero, however, Demosthenes is at his best in the grand style: 'He gets the applause and makes his speech count for the most, when he uses the topics of the impressive style (*gravitatis loci*).'[68] In a word, Cicero and Dionysius both stress the importance of stylistic versatility, but they articulate their ideals differently: the younger Greek scholar insists that the mixed style is superior, whereas the elder Roman prioritizes the grand style.

The second name that merits a moment of our attention is Demetrius of Phalerum (fl. ca. 300 BC), whom Cicero selects as the prime exponent of the intermediate style. As noted above, however, he was a quite ambivalent figure, as he was active at the time of the alleged decline of Attic oratory and the concomitant rise of its Asian counterpart (section 1.6). In *De Oratore*, Cicero portrays him as the initiator of 'softer and more relaxed types of style' (*molliora ac remissiora genera*), which Cicero recognized in the famous, or infamous, Asian orators Menecles and Hierocles of Alabanda.[69] Nevertheless, Cicero admires the calm and

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amnis can easily be connected to Cicero's middle style, which, after all, aims at 'charm' (*suavitas*) and 'entertainment' (*delectare*). The epithet *incitatus*, that Cicero attaches to Thucydides, is akin to the grand, or 'passionate' (*vehemens*), style. For Cicero's discussion of the styles of Theopompus and Ephorus, see n. 64 above.

[67] Cic. *Orat.* 23: *Hoc nec gravior exstitit quisquam nec callidior nec temperatior.* Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 33.3 describes Demosthenes as 'being the most successful of all the other authors in the three types of style' (ἐν τοῖς τρισὶ γένεσι κατορθῶν τῶν ἄλλων μάλιστα).

[68] Cic. *Orat.* 111: *Clamores tamen tum movet et tum in dicendo plurimum efficit cum gravitatis locis utitur.*

[69] Cic. *De or.* 2.94–95 declares Lycurgus, Demosthenes, Hyperides, Aeschines and Dinarchus to have been the last generation of truly Attic orators, after whose deaths started the habit of writing 'softer and more relaxed styles' (*molliora ac remissiora genera*), which in Cicero's own day could be found in the speeches of Menecles and Hierocles: see section 1.6 n. 128 above. For Demetrius as a transitional figure between Attic and Asian oratory, see Cic. *Brut.* 37–38 (= Demetrius of Phalerum fr. 175 Wehrli): 'He was the first to modulate oratory

peaceful flow of Demetrius' rhetoric, which makes it particularly apt for providing pleasure to the audience: hence, 'he entertained rather than stirred his countrymen'. Much like the middle style itself, as we have seen, Demetrius' oratory is thought not to be particularly at home in the struggles of the Forum (section 3.2.2): 'His training was less for the field than for the parade-ground' and 'he chose to use charm rather than force, a charm which diffused itself through the minds of his listeners without overwhelming them'.[70] Thus, Demetrius represents the pleasant vagueness that is the hallmark of Cicero's intermediate style.

To summarize, the threefold divisions of Cicero and Dionysius yield divergent classical canons. In the next two sections, I will zoom in on the goals and motivations that underlie the author lists of the Roman rhetorician and the Greek critic. Cicero's canon can to a large extent be ascribed to his opposition to the claims of the so-called *Attici* (section 3.4). Dionysius' canon, next, reflects the author's insistence on versatile eloquence with universal appeal (section 3.5).

3.4 Cicero against the So-Called *Attici*

In the decennium between 55 and 45 BC, as we saw in the introduction to this dissertation (section 1.4), a group of Roman orators who called themselves 'Attic' (*Attici*) rose to prominence on the Forum.[71] Presumably led by the orator-cum-poet C. Licinius Macer Calvus (whose two cognomina, incidentally, mean 'meager' and 'bald' respectively), these 'Neo-

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and give it softness and pliability, and he chose to use charm, as was his nature, rather than force' (*hic primus inflexit orationem et eam mollem teneramque reddidit et suavis, sicut fuit, videri maluit*). Douglas (1966) 28 and (1973) 95 discusses three possible interpretations of the phrase 'modulating oratory' (*inflectere orationem*); on the basis of the elder Seneca's treatment of the declaimer Latro, Heldmann (1979) shows that the phrase probably refers to Demetrius' use of extraordinary and unusual expressions, that is, periphrasis instead of direct expression. For a similar assessment of Demetrius' style, see Quint. *Inst. orat.* 1.10.80 (= Demetrius of Phalerum F180 Wehrli). On softness and indirect expressions as attributes typically associated with Asianism, see esp. section 5.3 below. Chiron (2014) 120 points out that Demetrius has collaborated with the dictators of Athens, which Cicero condemns in *Brut.*

[70] Cic. *Brut.* 37: *Delectabat magis Atheniensis quam inflammabat.* Ibid.: *Non tam armis institutus quam palaestra.* Ibid. 38: *Suavis videri maluit quam gravis, sed suavitate ea, qua perfunderet animos, non qua perfringeret.* Cf. Cicero's comparison between rhetorical and philosophical prose: the former is considered tough and direct, whereas the latter is 'soft and academic' (*mollis et umbratilis*). See Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 32.1, comparing Plato's style to 'bodies that pursue a life of ease in the shade' (σκιὰς καὶ ῥᾳστώνας διώκοντα σώματα).

[71] On the chronological issues concerning Atticism, see section 1.4 above. On the problematic treatment of Atticism in modern scholarship, see section 5.2 below. For the relationship between Cicero's, Dionysius' and Calvus' conceptions of Attic style, see esp. sections 5.4–5.6 below.

Atticists' insisted that oratorical style should imitate the simplicity of Lysias and should therefore be devoid of extravagant ornamentation: accordingly, they attacked Cicero for his lavish use of rhythm and periodic sentence structure (section 5.6.1). In his *Orator*, the latter offered a sustained, theoretically underpinned response to the Atticists' minimalistic view of style: according to Cicero, the power of oratory is to a large extent based on style and an orator should therefore gain access to all of its resources. After all, the word *eloquentia* itself, he argues, highlights 'style' (*elocutio*) itself, the third task of the orator: 'The very name 'eloquent' shows that the orator excels because of this one quality, that is, in his use of language, and the other qualities are overshadowed by this. For the all-inclusive word is not discoverer (*inventor*) or arranger (*compositor*) or performer (*actor*), but in Greek he is called ῥήτωρ form the verb 'to speak', and in Latin he is said to be *eloquens*.'[72]

Cicero's insistence on the importance of style in his *Orator* is an integral part of his self-defense against the scorn of the frugal Atticists. The apology of his own stylistic legacy is to a large degree based on the theory of three styles. In fact, he uses the threefold division to attack the self-styled Attic orators in three ways. First, he claims that the Atticists are misguided in their focus on one stylistic register only, as there are actually three separate styles which all deserve to be labeled 'Attic'. According to Cicero, the ideal orator should, like Demosthenes, be a master of all three styles (section 2.3.2). Secondly, since the Atticists only accept the simple style as genuinely Attic, the Roman author closely examines this style and concludes that their conception of it is misguided. And thirdly, Cicero argues that the best style is the one that is diametrically opposed to the one favored by the Atticists, in spite of which Cicero insists that it is still thoroughly Attic.[73] In a word, the theory of three styles gives Cicero ample opportunity to refute his opponents' claims about Attic style and to defend his own oratorical legacy.

We should note, however, that Cicero does not always use the three-style formula: in his *Brutus*, which was published in the early months of 46 BC, briefly before his *Orator*

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[72] Cic. *Orat.* 61: *Quem hoc uno excellere, id est oratione, cetera in eo latere indicat nomen ipsum. Non enim inventor aut compositor aut actor qui haec complexus est omnia, sed et Graece ab eloquendo ῥήτωρ et Latine eloquens dictus est.*

[73] Dugan (2001) 406–420 and (2005) 270–288 highlights this point, showing that Cicero uses the three-style doctrine mainly to contrast the plain with the grand, the Atticists' meager style with his own extravagant style: 'We find Atticisim and Asianism along the familiar polarities of thin and fat, dry and moist.' In this section, I will show that the three styles do not merely highlight the contrast between Calvus' frugal and Cicero's abundant oratory, but that they provide Cicero with various arguments to refute the claims of his opponents.

(section 1.4), Cicero rather seems to apply a two-style division. Comparing the styles of C. Aurelius Cotta (124–73 BC) and P. Sulpicius Rufus (124/123–88 BC), two famous orators from Cicero's youth, he notes: 'Since then there are two distinct types of good oratory—and that is the only kind we are considering—one simple and concise, the other elevated and abundant.'[74] This is the only explicit reference to stylistic registers in the entire *Brutus*: its conspicuous omission of the intermediate style has left modern readers astonished.[75] In my view, the twofold doctrine of *Brutus* and the threefold formulas of *De oratore* and *Orator* testify to the flexibility of the discourse on prose style in Late-Republican Rome. In his *Brutus*, Cicero merely contrasts the styles of two famous orators, but in his *Orator*, the same author is concerned with the importance of stylistic versatility in the face of the monolithic conception of style of the self-proclaimed Atticists. The malleability of stylistic theory allows him to present only two styles in the former treatise, while he adds a third style in the latter work.

In what way does Cicero exploit the three-style formula in his *Orator* in order to undercut the anti-Ciceronian arguments of the Atticists? First, as I have noted, Cicero insists that the consummate orator can employ all three styles at will. He connects the three styles, as we have seen, to the three tasks of the orator: the simple style is used for proof (*in probando*), the middle style for pleasure (*in delectando*), and the grand style to sway the audience (*in flectendo*).[76] To ignore two of the three styles, as Cicero accuses the Atticists of doing, is to

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[74] Cic. *Brut.* 201: *Quoniam ergo oratorum bonorum, hos enim quaerimus, duo genera sunt, unum attenuate presseque, alterum sublate ampleque dicentium.* Cotta's style is considered typical for the former type, while Sulpicius' style is thought to be characteristic for the latter type. Both men feature as interlocutors in *De or.*

[75] Hendrickson (1905) 270–271 argues that *Brut.* and *Orat.* tap into different traditions concerning the types of style, the *Brut.* referring to the older view, which goes back to Aristotle, that there are two diametrically opposed styles, while *Orat.* accepts the more recent addition of a third, intermediate style. Quadlbauer (1958) and Fantham (1979) 450 regard the two-style theory of *Brut.* as a temporary deviation from Cicero's subscription to the three-style formula. Narducci (2002) 404, next, tries to reconcile *Brut.* with *Orat.* by arguing that Cicero in the former work already propagates the ideal of stylistic versatility. Guérin (2014), lastly, thinks that Cicero's conception of the stylistic registers is subject to a development in three stages: in *De or.*, first, the author casually distinguishes between three types of style; in his *Brut.*, next, he presents a normative doctrine of style which is limited to two types; in his *Orat.*, lastly, Cicero distinguishes between three styles, so as to illustrate his ideal of stylistic versatility ('polyvalence stylistique'), replacing the notion of various types of style with the idea of one (or three-in-one) perfect style. I contend that the differences between *De or.*, *Brut.*, *Orat.* can be more elegantly and less problematically ascribed to the flexibility of the stylistic discourse in the first century BC.

[76] Cic. *Orat.* 69. See section 3.2.1, esp. table 3, above for the ways in which Cicero aligns his articulations of the three-style formula in *Orat.* to his triple doctrine of oratorical tasks. Cf. also Guérin (2014) 168–171.

neglect two essential tasks of the orator. Hence, the Atticists can provide proof for their arguments, but they are unable to entertain or sway their listeners. The perfect orator, Cicero claims, 'will decide what is needed at any point, and will be able to speak in any way which the case requires'.[77] Appropriateness (τὸ πρέπον, or, as Cicero translates it, *decorum*) is key and hinges on several aspects—the subject under discussion, the character of both speaker and audience, the section of the speech to which the words belong (table 3).[78] All these aspects should be considered in determining which type of style is required. In Cicero's view, the Atticists cannot speak appropriately on every occasion, for they lack the stylistic flexibility to speak in any way which the case demands.

Secondly, Cicero dwells extensively on the plain style, which, after all, is the only true Attic style according to Calvus and his followers. Cicero's discussion of the characteristic features of the simple style aims to show that the Atticists misunderstand the nature of this register. To begin with, Cicero distinguishes between two types of 'plain' orators: some are 'astute' (*callidi*) but 'unpolished' (*impoliti*) and 'intentionally resembling the speech of untrained and unskillful speakers' (*consulto rudium similes et imperitorum*); others, conversely, are 'more balanced' (*concinniores*), 'elegant' (*faceti*), even 'flourishing' (*florentes*) and 'to a slight degree ornate' (*leviter ornati*).[79] The self-proclaimed Atticists belong to the first group: according to Cicero their rough and unpolished speech is equivalent

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[77] Cic. *Orat.* 69: *Nam et iudicabit quid cuique opus sit et poterit quocumque modo postulabit causa dicere*. Cf. the definition of the ideal orator provided by Crassus in *De or.* 1.64: 'That man, in my opinion, will be an orator, worthy of so great a name, who, whatever subject comes before him, and requires rhetorical elucidation, can speak on it judiciously, in set form, elegantly, and from memory, and with certain dignity of action' (*is orator erit mea sententia hoc tam gravi dignus nomine, qui, quaecumque res inciderit, quae sit dictione explicanda, prudenter et composite et ornate et memoriter dicet cum quadam actionis etiam dignitate*). Transl. May and Wisse (2001). Here, the difference in scope between *De or.* and *Orat.* comes to the fore: whereas the former work looks for perfection in all five canons of eloquence, the latter work focuses on style.

[78] For Cicero's views of appropriateness, see *Or.* 70–74. Pohlenz (1933) explores the evolution of the meaning of τὸ πρέπον, as a crucial concept in Greek thought. The locus classicus for appropriateness in stylistic theory is Arist. *Rh.* 3.2: see section 3.1 n. 8 above. Cicu (2000) focuses on the relationship between the Ciceronian notion of *decorum* and the Greek concept of τὸ πρέπον: cf. section 3.2.1 n. 27 above. It appears that Cicero's interpretation of literary appropriateness is related to his view of moral appropriateness: Cic. *Orat.* 70 professes that the same law holds good 'in life as well as in speech' (*ut enim in vita, sic in oratione*). *Decorum* is not only Cicero's fourth out of four cardinal stylistic virtues, but also his fourth out of four cardinal virtues in life itself: see *Off.* 1.93–151.

[79] Cic. *Orat.* 20: *In eodemque genere alii callidi, sed impoliti et consulto rudium similes et imperitorum, alii in eadem ieiunitate concinniores, idem faceti, florentes etiam et leviter ornati*.

to an 'incapacity of coherent speech' (*infantia*), but the trick is to appear to speak in the language of the masses without actually abasing oneself to the inadequacy of the speechless (*infantes*).[80] Therefore, even the orator of the plain style should not wholly eschew stylistic ornamentation: 'Although it is not full-blooded (*non plurimi sanguinis*), it should nevertheless have some of the sap of life (*sucus*) so that, though it lacks supreme power (*maximae vires*), it may still be, so to speak, of sound health (*integra valetudine*).'[81] The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* already describes the faulty style that is akin to the simple style as 'bloodless' (*exsanguis*), 'dry' (*aridus*) and 'meager' (*exilis*); Cicero ascribes a similar fault to the Atticists.[82]

It is clear, then, that Cicero prefers a simple style that is not entirely devoid of stylistic flourish. What ornamentations are allowed in Cicero's conception of the plain type of oratory? He admits that some devices are taboo, such as rhythm, 'cementing the words together' (*verba verbis coagmentare*) by avoidance of hiatus, and periodic structure.[83] Yet, the orator is allowed to make use of the 'orator's toolbox' (*oratoria supellectilis*), provided that he do so moderately and inconspicuously.[84] Cicero compares the simple style to a woman, who is prettier when she remains unadorned. In dressing up this lady, all noticeable ornaments, such as jewelry and cosmetics, should be removed, so that elegance and neatness (*elegantia et munditia*) remain: the plain-style orator should not use 'pearls' (*margaritae*), 'curling-irons' (*calamistri*), or 'artificial white and rouge' (*medicamenta candoris et ruboris*).[85] What, then, is left in the rhetorical toolbox for the orators of the simple style to

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[80] Cic. *Orat.* 236. Cf. ibid. 76, explaining that an audience of 'people who do not possess the faculty of natural speech' (*infantes*) tend to think that an oration in the simple style is 'easy to imitate' (*imitabilis*): yet, 'nothing is less true, when one attempts it' (*nihil est experienti minus*). Similarly, Dionysius praises Lysias, despite the simplicity of his style for his artistry: cf. n. 87 below.

[81] Cic. *Orat.* 76: *Etsi enim non plurimi sanguinis est, habeat tamen sucum aliquem oportet, ut, etiamsi illis maximis viribus careat, sit, ut ita dicam, integra valetudine.*

[82] *Rhet. Her.* 4.16. Demetr. *Eloc.* 236–239 presents the so-called 'arid' (ξηρός) style as a neighboring vice to the simple style, while Gell. *NA* 6.14.5 calls the speakers who unsuccessfully aim at simplicity 'filthy and barren' (*squalentes et ieiuni*). See section 3.2.1 n. 26 for the ancient sources on faulty types of style.

[83] The theory of word arrangement is the second major topic of *Orat.*, in addition to the theory of three styles. For Cicero's ambivalent approach to the topic of hiatus, see *Orat.* 77–78, 150–152 with section 4.5.1 below.

[84] Cic. *Orat.* 80.

[85] Cic. *Orat.* 78–79. Leidl (2003) discusses Cicero's representation of rhetoric as a *casta virgo* (e.g. *Brut.* 353, *Orat.* 64) and links it to Dionysius' images of the chaste muse representing Attic oratory and the insensate harlot representing Asianic rhetoric at *Ant. orat.* 1.5–7. On Dionysius' allegory see esp. De Jonge (2014a). Cf. section 5.4 below on the personifications of Attic style in Cicero and Dionysius: we will see that the proposed imagery makes the various conceptions of Atticism in Rome conveniently tangible.

use?[86] They are allowed, for one, to use metaphors, as long as they are not far-fetched and only if they are used to make the meaning clear: they must not be meant solely for entertainment. Furthermore, the simple orator may add figures of speech to his discourse, provided that they do not result in periodic sentences or involve uncommon words and harsh imagery, and he may also use figures of thought, if they are not 'overly glaring' (*vehementer illustria*).[87] Lastly, Cicero requires the plain orator to sprinkle humor and wit (*facetiae et dicacitas*) over his speech: he considers these features hallmarks of Atticism (*maxime Atticum*), although he has never seen any of 'these modern Atticists' (*isti novi Attici*), that is, Calvus and his followers, use them correctly.[88]

The third way in which Cicero redefines Attic oratory is concerned with the grand style. As he argues in his *Orator*, this grand style is the most powerful style in public oratory: 'For it is the one thing that avails the most in winning cases.'[89] Between his interest in the grand and the simple style Cicero virtually glosses over the middle style, claiming, as we have seen, that it does not originally come from the Forum, but from the schools of the philosophers and the sophists, and that it is better suited to epideictic oratory than to the action of the courts and the assemblies (section 3.2.2). The middle style holds a rather ambiguous mean between grandeur and simplicity: 'Between these two there is a mean and I may say tempered style, which uses neither the intellectual appeal of the latter class nor the thunderous force of the former; akin to both, excelling in neither, sharing in both, or, to tell the truth,

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[86] Cic. *Orat.* 81–90 describes the rhetorical tools that are permitted for the simple orator, discussing metaphors (81–82), figures of speech and thought (83–85) and humor (86–90) respectively.

[87] The gist of the matter seems to be that the orator may use stylistic ornamentation, as long as it is not obvious to his audience that he does so. Cf. De Jonge (2008) 224–226 on Dionysius' views of natural style, esp. with respect to Lysias: 'He does not mean to say that Lysias' composed his speeches instinctively, nor that he did not make use of artistic techniques. In fact, Lysias' speeches are supposed to be the product of an art (τέχνη) that *imitates* nature (φύσις).' See, e.g., Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 8.6: Lysias' arrangement of words 'is more carefully composed than any work of art. For this artlessness is itself the product of art: the relaxed structure is really under control, and it is in the very illusion of not having been composed with masterly skill that the mastery lies' (ἔστι δὲ παντὸς μᾶλλον ἔργου τεχνικοῦ κατεσκευασμένος. Πεποίηται γὰρ αὐτῷ τοῦτο τὸ ἀποίητον καὶ δέδεται τὸ λελυμένον καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ μὴ δοκεῖν δεινῶς κατεσκευάσθαι τὸ δεινὸν ἔχει). Cf. Viidebaum (2019) 110–111, who notes that Dionysius' emphasis on the deceptive quality of Lysias' style resembles Phaedrus' judgment of the orator's style in Pl. *Phdr.* 227c5, 228a2.

[88] Cicero uses the distinction between *facetiae* and *dicacitas* as an apology for Demosthenes' perceived deficiency in the field of humor: see section 2.3 n. 35 above. Wisse (1995) 75–76 adduces the phrase 'these modern Atticists' (*isti novi Attici*) as proof for 'a date of ca. 60 BCE for the beginning of Atticism as a whole'.

[89] Cic. *Orat.* 69: *Nam id unum ex omnibus ad obtinendas causas potest plurimum.*

sharing in neither.'[90] As a result of this vague description, the middle style has been called a 'colorless half-way house'.[91] Yet, it adds substance to Cicero's argument about the versatility of Attic style, and, by connecting this vague mean to his doctrine of the orator's tasks, he can use it as yet another stick to beat his opponents with.

To return to the grand style, we have seen that this elevated type is typically characterized by 'force' (*vis*). Cicero argues that this style has 'the greatest power' (*maxima vis*) of all three styles and even that it sums up 'all the orator's power' (*vis omnis oratoris*).[92] According to the rhetorician, Demosthenes receives the most lavish praise, when he expends the full power of his eloquence.[93] There is, however, an important caveat: an orator must only use the grand style at appropriate occasions and even then he must temper its abundance with the other two styles. If he launches into a fiery, vehement speech, without preparing the minds of his listeners, 'he seems to be a raving madman (*furere*) among the sane, like a drunken reveler (*bacchari*) in the midst of sober men.'[94] An orator, who uses one of the other two styles, 'is far from standing on slippery ground, and, once he gets a foothold, he will never fall'.[95] Cicero's emphasis on the dangers of grandiloquence accords well with ancient criticism on sublime literature, which stresses the perils of elevation. The author of *On the Sublime*, for example, submits that 'it may be inevitable that humble, mediocre natures, because they never run any risks and never aid at the heights, should remain to a large extent safe from error, while in great natures their very greatness spells danger'.[96]

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[90] Cic. *Orat.* 21: *Est autem quidam interiectus inter hos medius et quasi temperatus nec acumine posteriorum nec fulmine utens superiorum, vicinus amborum, in neutro excellens, utriusque particeps vel utriusque, si verum quaerimus, potius expers.*

[91] Winterbottom (1989) 127. Cf. Leeman (1963) 39 on the discussion of the middle style in *Rhet. Her.*: it 'is mainly characterized by what it is not. It does not have the pathos of the *gravis figura*, nor the naked simplicity of the *figura adtenuata*. What remains is a pleasant and relaxed loftiness'. On the middle style in Cic. and *Rhet. Her.*, see esp. section 3.2.2 above.

[92] Cic. *Orat.* 69, 97.

[93] For the ancient tradition of associating Demosthenes particularly with power and forcefulness (δεινότης, *vis*), see section 2.3.1, esp. n. 47, and section 2.3.2, esp. n. 59, above.

[94] Cic. *Orat.* 99: *Furere apud sanos et quasi inter sobrios bacchari vinulentus videtur.* Long. *Subl.* 3.2, 16.4 and 32.7 also uses the follower of Bacchus as an image for the author of sublime literature. See also De Jonge (2012a), who notices a remarkable convergence in Dionysius' and Longinus' use of religious language to describe elevation or sublimity.

[95] Cic. *Orat.* 98: *Mimimeque in lubrico versabitur et, si semel constiterit, nunquam cadet.*

[96] Long. *Subl.* 33.2: Μήποτε δὲ τοῦτο καὶ ἀναγκαῖον ᾖ, τὸ τὰς μὲν ταπεινὰς καὶ μέσας φύσεις διὰ τὸ μηδαμῇ παρακινδυνεύειν μηδὲ ἐφίεσθαι τῶν ἄκρων ἀναμαρτήτους ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ καὶ ἀσφαλεστέρας διαμένειν, τὰ δὲ

Cicero agrees with the later Greek authors Dionysius and Longinus that the grand style has the power to carry away the minds of the audience and to move them in any possible direction, provided that it is used appropriately. If the stakes are highest, Cicero argues, the grand style is required. As I have already noted, he associates the grand style with Pericles or Demosthenes, who had used their eloquence for the noblest and grandest of causes, viz., the defense of Greek freedom: we will see that Cicero imagines himself a Roman-era Pericles and Demosthenes in the face of Caesar's dictatorship (section 5.5.1). In his essay *De Optimo Genere Oratorum*, moreover, he remembers the circumstances of his speech in defense of Milo (52 BC), 'when the army was stationed in the Forum and in all the temples round about': he censures anyone who thinks that in such a dangerous situation, a subdued, Lysianic style would suffice. In other words, neither Calvus nor any of his fellow-Atticists would have been able to pull such a life-and-death speech off.[97] Ironically, Cicero's effort ultimately did not secure an acquittal for Milo: it is the rewritten version of the speech that has come to be celebrated as one of the most accomplished orations in Cicero's rhetorical oeuvre.[98]

We may conclude that the theory of three styles provides Cicero with several powerful strategies against the self-styled Atticists. He uses it to show the variety of Attic oratory, to correct the Atticists' interpretation of the simple style, and finally to point out where the true power of eloquence can be found—on the dangerous cliffs of sublime oratory.

3.5 Dionysius and the Aesthetics of the Middle

Naturally, Dionysius does not use the three-style formula necessarily for the same purposes as Cicero. As was the case with Cicero, however, we will see that Dionysius' conception of the

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μεγάλα ἐπισφαλῆ δι' αὐτὸ γίνεσθαι τὸ μέγεθος. See Porter (2016) 198–199 for the connections between the sublime and danger in ancient literary criticism: the risky nature of elevated style is already discussed in Pl. *Resp.* 497d9–10. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 2.6 considers 'risk' (τὸ τολμηρόν) a feature of elevated diction, and 'safety' (ἀσφάλεια) a feature of the plain type. The mistakes most frequently associated with grandeur are 'frigidity' (ψυχρότης) and 'bombast' (τὸ ὄγκος): see esp. Gutzwiller (1969). Cf. section 2.4.1 n. 110 above.

[97] Cic. *Opt. gen.* 10: *Exercitu in foro et in omnibus templis, quae circum forum sunt, collocato.* See section 2.3.2 n. 61 for a fuller discussion of this passage. La Bua (2010) 36–37 argues that Cicero refers to *Mil.* in *Opt. gen.*, because he could not leave unanswered the idea that he was unable to deliver a good speech in a tough situation.

[98] For this lavish praise, see Asc. *Mil.* 42c: 'He has written the text that we can read so perfectly that it can rightly be considered his best' (*scripsit vero hanc quam legimus ita perfecte ut iure prima haberi possit*). Dio Cass. 40.54.3 relates that, when Milo read Cicero's rewritten speech during his exile, he bitterly remarked 'that, if Cicero had spoken in this manner, he would not now be enjoying the delicious red mullets of Massilia' (οὐ τοιαύτας ἐν τῇ Μασσαλίᾳ τρίγλας ἐσθίειν, εἴπερ τι τοιοῦτον ἀπελελόγητο).

three stylistic registers is to a large extent accommodated to suit the specific purposes of his essays. Significantly, he expounds the three styles in only two extant works, *On Demosthenes* and *On the Arrangement of Words*, both attributed to his so-called middle period. In the former work the threefold formula is omnipresent: Dionysius discusses both the three types of diction and the three types of arrangement.[99] We find no mention of these divisions in the remainder of his extant oeuvre, bar one quote from *On Demosthenes* in the *Letter to Pompeius*.[100] He does not refer to the three styles, for instance, in the surviving fragments of *On Imitation* nor in his other treatises on individual authors, such as *On Lysias*, *On Isocrates* and *On Thucydides*. Yet, he presents Lysias, Isocrates and Thucydides in *On Demosthenes* and *On the Arrangement of Words*, as we have seen, as outstanding exponents of the three styles (section 3.3). Why, then, does he so suddenly and so intensely turn to the three styles in the latter two treatises, while he does not show any interest in the topic in his other works?

To answer this question we must first briefly address the works in which Dionysius does not concern himself with the threefold division: in these works the critic instead adopts a twofold scheme. We have already seen that Cicero resorts to such a binary view, when he discusses the styles of Sulpicius and Cotta in his *Brutus* (section 3.4): likewise, Dionysius only recognizes two types of style, as long as he is discussing the stylistic character of only one or two authors. Concerning diction, for instance, he often contrasts plain to elevated language, omitting the intermediate type. Both his earlier works, such as *On Lysias*, and his later works, such as *On Thucydides*, exemplify this binary approach: Dionysius adduces the contrast between plain and elevated diction, for instance, to throw into relief Lysias' simplicity and Thucydides' loftiness.[101] In *On Isocrates*, moreover, Dionysius does not classify Isocrates' style as mixed, as he does in *On Demosthenes*, but he rather sets up the orator in a binary scheme against Lysias: he presents Lysias, unsurprisingly, as the more down-to-earth orator, while Isocrates is described as 'more elevated, more impressive and

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[99] For the types of diction, see *Dem.* 1–34; for the types of arrangement, see *Comp.* 21–24 and *Dem.* 35–52. These two treatises were composed in roughly the same period: for the relative chronology of Dionysius' critical oeuvre, see section 1.5 above.

[100] *Pomp.* 2 quotes *Dem.* 5–7 (on Plato's mixed style of diction) almost verbatim. The fact that theories of three styles appear only in *Dem.*, *Comp.* and *Pomp.* is a strong argument in favor of studying these works as a separate group within Dionysius' oeuvre: cf. Bonner (1939) 32, De Jonge (2008) 19–20.

[101] Cf. Hendrickson (1904) 143: for Dionysius, 'there are but two fundamental styles, the simple and the grand.' Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 8.3, for instance, contrasts 'clear, standard, ordinary speech which is thoroughly familiar to everyone' (ἡ σαφὴς καὶ κυρία καὶ κοινὴ καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις συνηθεστάτη) to 'pompous, outlandish and contrived language' (ὁ ὄγκος καὶ τὸ ξένον καὶ τὸ ἐξ ἐπιτηδεύσεως). Cf., e.g., ibid. 13.2–5, *Thuc.* 33.2.

more dignified' (ὑψηλότερος, μεγαλοπρεπέστερος, ἀξιωματικός).[102] Apparently, the middle type of diction is not yet on Dionysius' mind. As for the arrangement of words, the situation is similar: the critic has no attention for an intermediate harmony in the majority of his oeuvre, but he is only interested in binary divisions, pitting Isocrates' smooth, artificial harmony indiscriminately against Thucydides' rough type as well as against Lysias' simple style.[103]

Thus, the feature that sets apart *On Demosthenes* and *On Composition* from the rest of Dionysius' critical works is the introduction of a mixed, intermediate style between the two opposite extremes, that is, either between simple and elevated diction, or between smooth and rough arrangement. In both topics of style, Dionysius declares the middle type to be the most powerful style: he consistently classifies his favorite authors in this category. On the subject of word selection, his favorite is Demosthenes, who 'perfected' (ἐτελείωσεν) the middle style after he had inherited it 'in an imperfect form' (ἀτελές) from Plato and Isocrates.[104] On the subject of word arrangement, next, his absolute favorite is Homer, 'the summit on which everyone's gaze should be fixed' (κορυφὴ ἀπάντων καὶ σκόπος), while in prose he considers Herodotus, Plato and Demosthenes second to none.[105] The middle style provides Dionysius with a framework within which he can describe the perfect style. It is not a coincidence that we find it only in *On Demosthenes* and *On the Arrangement of Words*: it is in these two works that Dionysius sets out to identify his most beloved literary heroes and the stylistic features that set them apart.

What makes the middle style such a convenient vehicle for Dionysius for articulating his ideas about stylistic excellence? I have already noted that Dionysius actually interprets the concept of the middle in two different ways (section 3.2.2): he conceives it not only as an intermediate stage between two extremes (μέσος, μεταξὺ τῶν ἄκρων), but also as a kind of mixture or combination of these very extremes (μῖγμα, κρᾶσις, σύνθεσις).[106] Dionysius

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[102] Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 3.5.

[103] For Isocrates' arrangement, see Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 2.4–7, 12.3–13. It is not illogical that Dionysius contrasts Isocrates to both Thucydides and Lysias: as we have seen in section 3.3, n. 62 above, Lysias' uncontrived, natural style of word arrangement displays several features that Dionysius associates with rough harmony.

[104] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 14.1.

[105] See Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 24.4 for the praise of Homer's arrangement, and *Dem.* 41.2–3, 43.1; *Comp.* 10.5, 19.12 and 25.29–44 for the praise of the arrangement of Herodotus, Plato and Demosthenes. Among the latter three prose authors, Demosthenes is Dionysius' favorite overall author (cf. section 2.3.3 above), but on the specific topic of word arrangement, Dionysius declares Plato to be at the very least Demosthenes' equal (*Comp.* 18.13).

[106] These two, seemingly contradictory, interpretations of the middle style are subject of some discussion. Hendrickson (1904) 143, for instance, argues that the two conceptions of the middle in Dionysius' works are

himself seems to be rather indifferent about the potential incompatibility between these two interpretations: 'I have no idea how to describe the way in which the third style is produced —"my mind is too divided to utter the truth". I cannot say whether it is formed by removing the two extremes (κατὰ στέρησιν) or by combining them (κατὰ μῖξιν), for it is not easy to find a clear solution to problem.'[107] The two ideas often appear side by side: the middle type of word selection is said to be 'intermediary and well-blended' (μέση καὶ εὔκρατος) and the middle type of word arrangement is described as 'intermediary and mixed' (μέση καὶ μικτή).[108] In the present section, we will see that Dionysius is not at all worried about the consistency of his teachings: he simply puts the discrepant interpretations to use as complementary strategies to present his stylistic program.[109]

First of all, by situating the middle style simply between the other two styles Dionysius can add the authority of Aristotle and Theophrastus to his argument. This indebtedness of Dionysius to the Peripatetic school has often been remarked upon.[110]

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incompatible, the idea of a mixture bearing 'only a crude external resemblance' to the Peripatetic concept of a mean between the extremes. Likewise, Stroux (1907) 111 n. 3 thinks that 'the former interpretation in fact contradicts the latter' (*revera altera impugnat alteri*), adding that Dionysius' mixture can be linked to the idea of a proper mean through his insistence on good measure. Bonner (1938) 263–264 argues that the idea of a mixed style follows from a 'quite understandable development' from Aristotle's and Theophrastus' argument for a mean between the extremes. Goudriaan (1989) 504–510, lastly, attempts to reconcile Dionysius' and Aristotle's views on style by quoting Arist. *Poet.* 22.1458a31–34 and *Rh.* 3.12.6, which both refer to stylistic mixtures.

[107] Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 21.4–5: Ἦν ὅπως ποτὲ γίνεσθαι φαίην ἄν, ἔγωγε ἀπορῶ καὶ 'δίχα μοι νόος ἀτρέκειαν εἰπεῖν', εἴτε κατὰ στέρησιν τῶν ἄκρων ἑκατέρας εἴτε κατὰ μῖξιν· οὐ γὰρ ῥᾴδιον εἰκάσαι τὸ σαφές. The pronoun ἥν refers to the middle type of arrangement (ἡ τρίτη κοινὴ διαφορά). The quote is Pind. fr. 213 Schroeder.

[108] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 3.5, 42.2. See also ibid. 36.6, 43.10 and *Comp.* 24.1. Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 21, which describes the intermediate style as 'sharing in both, or, to tell the truth, sharing in neither' (*utriusque particeps vel utriusque, si verum quaerimus, potius expers*): Cicero, however, does not explore the notion of mixing any further: while Dionysius defines the middle style always in relation to the other two styles, Roman authors tend to assign to the middle style its own particular character and function, that is, to provide pleasure and entertainment. Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.58, as we have seen, gives 'flowery' (*floridum*) as an alternative name for the middle style.

[109] Porter (2016) 221 shows that Dionysius never meant his categories to be taken 'in a hard-and-fast way' and that 'the various surface inconsistencies in Dionysius' theory and evaluative practice are best explained by the provisional nature of his schemas'. It is my contention that the 'surface inconsistencies' are conveniently put to use by Dionysius as sources for various ad hoc arguments in favor of his own critical program.

[110] For the debate about Aristotle's successor Theophrastus as the possible inventor of the theory of three styles, see section 3.1 n. 9 above. For the relationship between Dionysius' theory of three styles and the Aristotelian notion of the mean, see the present section n. 106 above. To these discussions add Kroll (1907) 91–101, Pohl (1968) 94, both suggesting Peripatetic origins for Dionysius' views on musical word arrangement, and Paximadi

Dionysius himself explicitly links his views to Aristotle, when he discusses the intermediate type of word arrangement: he argues that this style deserves the first price, 'since it represents a sort of mean (μεσότης τις), and virtue in life, conduct and the arts is a mean in the view of Aristotle and the other philosophers of his school.'[111] The old master had submitted that in any aspect of life and the arts there exist 'excess' (ὑπεροχή), 'deficiency' (ἔλλειψις) and finally a 'mean' (μέσον), which is where excellence (ἀρετή) can be found. In this vein, Aristotle prescribes in his *Rhetoric*, as we have seen, that stylistic excellence (ἀρετὴ λέξεως) means that style should be 'neither flat (ταπεινή) nor above (ὑπέρ) the dignity of the subject, but appropriate (πρέπουσα).'[112] Aristotle's successor in the Lyceum, Theophrastus, seems to have thought along the same lines about style, as far as we can tell from the scattered remains of his works.[113]

Like the old masters of the Lyceum, Dionysius stresses the importance of the appropriate mean: he proclaims that appropriateness (τὸ πρέπον) is 'the most important of all literary qualities' (πασῶν ἐν λόγοις ἀρετῶν ἡ κυριωτάτη).[114] He considers the stylistic extreme types of diction and arrangement 'imperfect' (ἀτελεῖς) in this respect.[115] He describes

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(1989) 223–225, who connects Dionysius' grammatical theories to Peripatetic sources. In my view, as I will explain below, Dionysius' subscriptions to the teachings of a certain philosophical school (Peripatos, Stoa, etc.) are quite opportunistic: he can unabashedly abandon the views of his predecessors, if that suits his purposes.

[111] Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 24.2: Ἐπειδὴ μεσότης μέν τίς ἐστι (μεσότης δὲ ἡ ἀρετὴ καὶ βίων καὶ ἔργων καὶ τεχνῶν, ὡς Ἀριστοτέλει δοκεῖ τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὅσοι κατ' ἐκείνην τὴν αἵρεσιν φιλοσοφοῦσιν.

[112] A good starting point for studying Aristotle's conception of μεσότης is Moreau (1962) 207, who prints and discusses such key passages as Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 2.6.4–2.7.1, *Pol.* 3.8.5–7, and *Eth. Eud.* 2.2–2.3. For a discussion of Arist. *Rh.* 3.2, see section 3.1 n. 8 above.

[113] Two Theophrastean fragments specifically pertain to the middle as a stylistic concept. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 3.1 (= Theophr. fr. 685 Fortenbaugh) shows that Theophrastus considered Thrasymachus' prose a 'source for the mean' (πηγή τις τῆς μεσότητος). Cf. section 3.1 n. 10 above and the secondary literature cited there. Demetr. *Eloc.* 114 (= Theophr. fr. 686 Fortenbaugh) reports that Theophrastus describes frigidity (τὸ ψυχρόν) as 'that which exceeds the proper form of expression' (τὸ ὑπερβάλλον τὴν οἰκείαν ἀπαγγελίαν). Innes (1985) 260–262 and Fortenbaugh (2005) 273–281 offer thoughtful discussions of these passages.

[114] Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3.20. Cf. *Comp.* 12.20, which declares appropriateness is also the 'most powerful' (πάντων κράτιστον) means of composition. See also section 3.2.1 n. 8 and section 3.4 n. 78 above for Cicero's view on the importance of appropriateness (*decorum*) and its relationship to Greek views.

[115] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 2.8 states that Lysias and Thucydides 'are both brilliant in their own specialties, but also—and in this respect they are similar to each other—imperfect' (δεινοὶ μὲν ἐν τοῖς αὑτῶν ἔργοις ἀμφότεροι, καθ' ὃ δὲ ἴσοι ἀλλήλων ἦσαν, ἀτελεῖς). The translation, which follows Bonner (1938) 252 and Aujac (1988) 50, is mine. Note that Usher (1974) 247, agreeing with Hendrickson (1904) 142, translates the last part of the passage as 'imperfect in respect of those qualities which they possess in common' (καθ' ὃ δὲ ἴσοι ἀλλήλων ἦσαν,

their faults, in accordance with Aristotle, as excesses and deficiencies: Thucydides is said to use stylistic ornamentation 'without moderation' (ἀταμιεύτως) and 'excessively' (κατακόρως), while Lysias is sometimes censured for being too 'faint' (ἀμυδρός) and 'feeble' (ἀσθενής). Plato and Isocrates, conversely, are classified in the superior middle category, although in Dionysius' view their prose is 'imperfect' (ἀτελές) as well.[116] He portrays their mistakes, again, as failures in observing the appropriate mean. He takes issue, for instance, with Plato's elevated diction: in this register the philosopher is said to display 'an immoderate eagerness' (ἄμετρος ὁρμή). Isocrates, too, is criticized for not always striking the right note: he sometimes 'neglects moderation' (ὀλιγωρεῖ τοῦ μετρίου) and 'loses sight of what is appropriate' (ἀπολείπεται τοῦ πρέποντος).[117] Demosthenes, conversely, is celebrated as the consummate orator, precisely because of 'appropriateness, which touches the stars' (τὸ πρέπον ὃ τῶν ἄστρων ψαύει) in his speeches.[118]

Thus, Dionysius turns to Peripatetic vocabulary to give voice to his preference for the middle type of style. We should note, however, that Dionysius is not exclusively committed to Aristotle's school: he can and does transgress against its teachings, if that suits his purposes. Therefore, Dionysius should not be classified as a Peripatetic, merely because he shares some views with the scholars of the Lyceum. Unlike them, he construes the middle style, as we have seen, as a 'mixture' (μῖγμα) of the other two styles.[119] In *On the Arrangement of Words*,

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ἀτελεῖς). Yet, Dionysius does not point out the qualities which Lysias and Thucydides are supposed to have in common: his whole point is to show their incompatibility as stylistic opposites and to point out the extravagance of their extreme styles.

[116] For Thucydides, see Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 51.3, cf. also Dionysius' criticism of Gorgias' elevated style in *Is.* 19.2, *Dem.* 4.4 and *Thuc.* 24.9. For Lysias, see *Dem.* 13.8. For Plato and Isocrates, see *Dem.* 14.1.

[117] See Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 5.4, 18.3 and 18.7. Dionysius praises passages from Plato, where the author selects common, everyday words: the critic only censures passages which draw on elevated diction. Concerning Isocrates, however, Dionysius identifies mistakes both in plain and in elevated passage: when Isocrates uses unusual words, the style becomes 'flowery and showy' (ἀνθηρὰ καὶ θεατρική), while he overzealously strives for clarity in his simple passages, thus not attaining the essential virtue of 'conciseness' (συντομία).

[118] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 34.5. The cosmological metaphor can be linked to the ancient discourse on sublime literature: Porter (2016) 537–617 considers such imagery part of the tradition, heavily influenced by Plato, which equates sublimity with 'the ethereal, otherworldly and immaterial'. In Augustan Rome, Hor. *Od.* 1.1.35–36 has a similar image: 'But if you rank me among the lyrical poets, I shall soar aloft and strike the stars with my head' (*quod si me lyricis vatibus inseres, sublimi feriam sidera vertice*).

[119] See e.g. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 3.1, 5.1, 15.7, 41.1. The words μείγνυμι, μῖγμα, μῖξις and cognates refer to mixtures in a general sense: cf. LSJ s. μείγνυμι. See also n. 124 below on the words κρᾶσις and σύνθεσις, two subtypes of the μιγ-cognates.

he also calls the mixed type of arrangement 'common' (κοινός), expressing the idea that it shares in both the smooth and the rough.[120] Consequently, he does not seem to consider the extreme styles faulty per se: despite their inherent 'excesses' (ὑπερβολαί) each style has something 'useful' (χρήσιμον) to offer to the intermediate style.[121] In addition, Dionysius submits that this mixed style has 'no form peculiar to itself': it depends entirely on contributions from the other two styles.[122] Thus, Dionysius cherry-picks several ideas from Aristotle and Theophrastus, without committing himself unequivocally to them: the old masters would probably not have approved of their epigone's interpretation of the middle style.[123]

Rather confusingly the critic conveys two divergent ideas as to how this mixture should be formed: he interprets the mixed style occasionally as a 'blend' (κρᾶσις), in which the two extreme styles are merged together to form a homogeneous mixture (like water and wine), but at other times he suggests that the mixture is a 'combination' (σύνθεσις), whose constituents are joined next to each other and remain recognizable as separate styles (like water and oil).[124] How can Dionysius work with these seemingly contradictory notions?[125] In

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[120] Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 21.4, 24.1. Aujac and Lebel (1981) 219–220 suggest that Dionysius uses the term 'common' (κοινός) for the mixed type of arrangement to avoid confusion with the mixed type of diction that he expounds in the first part of *Dem.* Yet, he is not worried about such confusion in the second part of *Dem.*, when he never refers to the mixed type of arrangement as 'common'.

[121] See e.g. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 3.3, 8.2, 15.7, 41.1; *Comp.* 21.4, 24.1. Dionysius describes the mixed style as the product of a process of 'selection' (ἐκλογή) of the 'most powerful' (κράτιστα) and 'most useful' (χρησιμώτατα) elements from the extreme styles, at the same time avoiding the excesses.

[122] Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 24.1: σχῆμα ἴδιον οὐδέν. *Dem.* 41.1: οὐδεὶς χαρακτὴρ ἴδιος.

[123] On the incompatibility of Dionysius' views on the mixed style with the Peripatetic concept of the mean, see the literature cited in n. 106 above. Incidentally, Dionysius' opportunistic exploitation of various theoretical doctrines, without committing to any philosophical school wholesale, can also be seen in his use of Stoic ideas: see e.g. De Jonge (2008) 240–279 on Stoic and Peripatetic influences on Dionysius' views of natural word order: it is impossible to 'draw any conclusions about his alleged philosophy of language'. Indeed, we cannot assign Dionysius to either Peripatos or Stoa on the basis of his own critical essays.

[124] For κρᾶσις as a subtype of mixture (for which the μιγ-cognates are used, cf. n. 119 above), see Arist. *Top.* 4.122b26, *Stoic.* 2.153. See Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 2.1 for 'combination' (σύνθεσις) as a process of 'placing next to each other' (ποιά τις θέσις παρ' ἄλληλα).

[125] Like the apparent inconsistency that I discussed in n. 106 above, this issue has also been discussed by several scholars, some interpreting Dionysius' mixture as a homogeneous blend, others as a mechanical mixture. Pohl (1968) 59–68 and Van Wyk Cronjé (1968) 25 opt for the second view: Van Wyk Cronjé considers Dionysius' mixed style to be the application of the extreme types, 'however not simultaneously as *mixed* might suggest, but in alternating application of either one of the two extremes according to the prerequisite of appropriateness'. As

fact, Dionysius needs both interpretations, because one concept works better in word selection and the other in word arrangement. Unfortunately, Dionysius does not express this view unequivocally, as he uses the vocabulary of blending and combining seemingly haphazardly in both domains: he describes the mixed type of diction, for instance, as 'compounded' (σύνθετος) but also as 'well-blended' (εὔκρατος).[126] Still, he clearly prefers the former interpretation, for when he turns to specific examples of mixed diction, he builds exclusively on the concept of juxtaposition: he sharply demarcates simple passages from elevated ones, separating them through radical breaks.[127] Dionysius regards simple and elevated diction predominantly as units that are not used simultaneously, but in alternation.

In word arrangement, by contrast, Dionysius prefers the concept of blending. He does not describe the extreme harmonies as blocks that can only be used in their entirety, but he assumes that one can be diluted with the other: he repeatedly asserts that mixed composition is formed 'through the relaxation and the intensification of the extremes' (κατὰ τὴν ἄνεσίν τε καὶ ἐπίτασιν τῶν ἄκρων).[128] Thus, the mixed harmony can be fine-tuned to become either

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we will see in the remainder of the present section, this interpretation works well with respect to the mixed type of diction, but not with respect to the mixed type of arrangement. Bonner (1938) 261–263, conversely, thinks that the middle style 'is formed not by combination but by a process of selection of the best points in the two extremes and avoidance of the excesses'. Yet, this interpretation is more apposite to Dionysius' theory of diction than to his theory of arrangement. We must conclude, therefore, that Dionysius uses both concepts of mixture in his understanding of stylistic mixtures: he is less concerned with the consistency than with the expediency of his theoretical concepts. Cf. also Martinho (2010) for a discussion of Dionysius' conceptions of mixing.

[126] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 3.1, 3.5.

[127] Cf. Pohl (1968) 31–32. The analysis of passages from Pl. *Phdr.* in *Dem.* 7 exemplifies this approach. Dionysius states that the language in the first part of the dialogue (227a–236e) excels in the essential virtues of style: the text 'has much grace and is full of charm' (πολλὴν ὥραν ἔχει καὶ χαρίτων ἐστὶ μεστά). Dionysius argues that Plato turns to the additional virtues, as soon as the reading of Lysias' speech begins (237a): 'Like a violent wind bursting out of the calm still air, he shatters the purity of expressions by resorting to tasteless artificiality' (ὥσπερ ἐξ ἀέρος εὐδίου καὶ σταθεροῦ πολὺς ἄνεμος καταρραγείς, ταράττει τὸ καθαρὸν τῆς φράσεως ἐς ποιητικὴν ἐκφέρων ἀπειροκαλίαν). Other such analyses of individual passages can be found at *Dem.* 12–14 (on Dem. *Con.* 3–9), ibid. 17–20 (on Isoc. *Pac.* 41–50), ibid. 21–22 (on Dem. *Olynth. III* 23–32), ibid. 24–30 (on various passages from Pl. *Menex.* 236a–248c), and ibid. 31–32 (on Dem. *De cor.* 199–208).

[128] The image of 'relaxation and intensification', which refers to the strings of the lyre (cf. Pl. *Resp.* 349e), is one of Dionysius' favorite images to describe the mixed style of word arrangement: see *Comp.* 21.5, 24.3; *Dem.* 37.1, 44.1 and 46.2. He also applies it to Demosthenes' 'intensity' (τόνος) in *Dem.* 13.10, and to Isocrates' lack thereof in *Isoc.* 13.4; cf. Philod. *Rhet.* 4 col. 17.1–9 p. 198 Sudhaus. Dionysius does not, however, apply the image to the mixed type of word selection. At *Comp.* 21.5, he warns us not to take the comparison with music too seriously: 'It is not the same as in music, where the middle note is equidistant from the lowest and the

smoother or rougher according to the relative proportion of smooth and rough elements in the mix: the arrangement becomes rougher, for instance, through the inclusion of hiatus and slow rhythms, and it becomes smoother with the addition of fluid word combinations and quicker rhythms (section 4.4). In any case, Dionysius describes the resulting style as the product of a process of 'selection' (ἐκλογή) of those elements that are 'most useful' (χρησιμώτατα) and 'most powerful' (κράτιστα) for the author's purposes.[129] Thus, mixed styles come in many varieties: those authors who have used the mixed style 'have not all studied the same aspects of it or treated them in the same way, but some have studied one set more, others another. Moreover, when authors use the same aspects, some have intensified (ἐπέτειναν) them, some have relaxed (ἀνῆκαν) them in different ways.'[130]

Regardless of the precise interpretation of Dionysius' concept of mixing, the fact that the Greek teacher interprets the middle style as a mixture allows him to focus on two stylistic qualities that he considers paramount features of literary excellence: we already encountered these features in Dionysius' assessment of the genius of Demosthenes (section 2.3.3) and of the inadequacy of Hegesias of Magnesia (section 2.4.3). First of all, the idea of a mixture highlights the importance of stylistic versatility. Dionysius measures the success of the mixed style in terms of 'diversity' (ποικιλία), 'variation' (μεταβολή), 'timing' (εὐκαιρία), 'balance' (συμμετρία) and 'appropriateness' (πρέπον).[131] He praises Homer's composition, because he is the poet 'with the most voices' (πολυφωνότατος) and because 'he has pushed his varied mixture to the limit' (εἰς ἄκρον διαπεποίκιλται).[132] Dionysius devotes special attention to the author's ability to seize 'the right moment' (καιρός): Plato and Isocrates fall short because

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highest; the middle style in literature does not in the same way stand at an equal distance from the two extremes' (οὐ γὰρ ὥσπερ ἐν μουσικῇ τὸ ἴσον ἀπέχει τῆς νήτης καὶ τῆς ὑπάτης ἡ μέση, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ἐν λόγοις ὁ μέσος χαρακτὴρ ἑκατέρου τῶν ἄκρων ἴσον ἀφέστηκεν). Mixed harmony can indeed at times be closer to rough harmony, and at other times border on the smooth type: see also Aujac and Lebel (1981) 218.

[129] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 8.2 (on word selection), and ibid. 41.1, *Comp.* 24.1 (on word arrangement).

[130] Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 24.3: Οἵ τε χρησάμενοι αὐτῇ οὐ τὰ αὐτὰ πάντες οὐδ' ὁμοίως ἐπετήδευσαν, ἀλλ' οἳ μὲν ταῦτα μᾶλλον, οἳ δ' ἐκεῖνα, ἐπέτεινάν τε καὶ ἀνῆκαν ἄλλως ἄλλοι τὰ αὐτά. The pronoun αὐτῇ refers to the mixed type of arrangement (μικτὴ ἁρμονία).

[131] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 34.5 lists these items, with the exception of variation (μεταβολή), as the virtues that Demosthenes exhibits more than any other exponent of the mixed type of diction. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 11.1 highlights the importance of 'variation' (μεταβολή) and 'appropriateness' (πρέπον) in word arrangement: they are two of the four means to attain beauty and pleasure, in addition to 'rhythm' (ῥυθμός) and 'tone' (μέλος). Cf. section 4.4 n. 66.

[132] Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 16.8 and 24.4. The translation is mine.

their words are sometimes 'ill-timed' (ἄκαιρος), but Demosthenes always 'aims for what is needed and makes his style conform to the occasion' (τοῦ ἀρκοῦντος στοχάζεται καὶ τοὺς καιροὺς συμμετρεῖται).[133] Like Demosthenes, the consummate author of the mixed style is able to adapt his discourse to any given situation.

Secondly, Dionysius' notion of the middle style as a mixture of two extremes permits him to advertise a style that is perfectly suited for practical oratory in the public assemblies and the law-courts: as we already saw, Dionysius celebrates the practical force of Demosthenes' speeches as one of the orator's prime virtues (section 2.3.3). The critic reasons that the people who attend judicial and political meetings 'are neither all outstanding intellectual geniuses like Thucydides, nor all laymen with no experience of how a good speech is composed'.[134] Dionysius' ideal orator consequently adapts his choice of words to both groups: the connoisseurs and savants should be addressed in the striking, elevated diction of a Thucydides, whereas the simple words of a Lysias appeal to the uneducated majority. In a word, a mixed audience requires a mixed style: 'The speech which aims to persuade both these extreme classes of audience is less likely to fail in its objective.'[135] According to Dionysius, Demosthenes has understood this principle perfectly: his style is 'most perfectly adapted to all aspects of human nature' (πρὸς ἅπασαν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἡρμοσμένη) and it has 'universal appeal' (κοινή τε καὶ φιλάνθρωπος).[136] In the next section, I will further explore the consequences of Dionysius' ideas about mixed audiences, and compare his views to the ones that Cicero articulates.

Finally, the Greek critic conjures up the world of Homer's epics to convey the overwhelming power that the mixed style can wield over its readers and listeners. Much like the shapeshifting gods and heroes from mythology, the master of the mixed style is able to

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[133] The term καιρός is notoriously difficult to grasp or translate: as a rhetorical-technical term, Trédé (1992) 247–253 defines it as 'le principe qui gouverne le choix d'une argumentation, les moyens utilisés pour prouver et, plus particulièrement, le style adopté'. Kennedy (1963) 66 shows the close relationship between the term καιρός and other rhetorical concepts, such as 'appropriateness' (πρέπον), 'propriety' (οἰκειότης) and 'due measure' (μέτρον). On failures to observe καιρός, see e.g. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 4.4 (Isocrates) and ibid. 5.5 (Plato); on successes, see e.g. ibid. 10.3 (Demosthenes).

[134] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 15.2: Οὔτε δεινοὶ καὶ περιττοὶ πάντες εἰσὶ καὶ τὸν Θουκυδίδου νοῦν ἔχοντες οὔθ᾽ ἅπαντες ἰδιῶται καὶ κατασκευῆς λόγων γενναίων ἄπειροι. For Dionysius' views on the audiences of oratory in the classical Greek past and in the Roman present, see section 3.6 below.

[135] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 15.6: Ὁ δὲ ἀμφότερα τἀκροατήρια πείθειν ζητῶν ἧττον ἀποτεύξεται τοῦ τέλους. The word λόγος should be supplied as the subject of the verb ἀποτεύξεται.

[136] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 33.1, 33.3.

present himself to his audience in whichever way he desires. Dionysius compares Demosthenes' mixed type of diction to the ever-changing sea-god Proteus: the orator 'has created a single style out of many (...) which has a character not at all unlike that of Proteus as portrayed by the mythological poets, who effortlessly assumed every kind of shape, being either a god or superhuman, with the power to deceive human eyes'.[137] Similarly, we already saw that Dionysius adduces the image of the goddess Athena to describe the awesome power of word arrangement (section 2.4.3): 'It seems to me that one would not be wrong to compare word arrangement to Athena in Homer, for she used to make the same Odysseus appear in different forms at different times.'[138] These comparisons show that the author who successfully applies the mixed style puts a spell on his audience: like Proteus and Odysseus he can change into many forms, thus dictating precisely how he is perceived by the audience.

In conclusion, Dionysius' interpretation of the stylistic middle makes a rather ambiguous impression at first sight: he not only builds his views on the Peripatetic theory of the 'mean' (μεσότης), but he also presents his middle style as a mixture, or indeed a compound, of opposite styles. All in all, he does not seem to be overly worried about the apparent inconsistence of these ideas, as long they contribute to his mission of defining the perfect style. Dionysius exploits the concepts of mean, middle and mixture to serve his argument in the best way possible: in the end, he is able to define his preferred style as a versatile style with universal appeal, which can be applied to all circumstances and which caters for every audience.

3.6 Greek and Roman Audiences: the Three Styles in Action

In this last section of this chapter, I will take a closer look at the audiences that Cicero and Dionysius conjure up in their discussions of oratorical style. While the two authors interpret the three-style formula, as we have seen, in divergent ways, they share a general idea about

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[137] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 8.2–3: Μίαν ἐκ πολλῶν διάλεκτον ἀπετέλει (...) οὐδὲν διαλλάττουσαν τοῦ μεμυθευμένου παρὰ τοῖς ἀρχαίοις ποιηταῖς Πρωτέως, ὃς ἅπασαν ἰδέαν μορφῆς ἀμογητὶ μετελάμβανεν, εἴτε θεὸς ἢ δαίμων τις ἐκεῖνος ἄρα ἦν παρακρουόμενος ὄψεις τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας. Proteus' ability to change his appearance features in Hom. *Od.* 4.455–458, Verg. *G.* 4.405–414, 440–442 and, presumably, in Aeschylus' lost satyr play *Proteus.* Dionysius adopts an allegorical interpretation of the figure, not considering him a real god or hero, but rather a 'creature that stands for the varied language of a clever man, beguiling every ear' (διαλέκτου ποικίλον τι χρῆμα ἐν ἀνδρὶ σοφῷ, πάσης ἀπατηλὸν ἀκοῆς). I do not agree with Costil (1949) 473 and Aujac and Lebel (1981) 165, who think that Dionysius must be drawing on Stoic ideas, because he uses an allegorical interpretation of Homer.

[138] Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 4.12: Καὶ μοι δοκεῖ τις οὐκ ἂν ἁμαρτεῖν εἰκάσας αὐτὴν τῇ Ὁμηρικῇ Ἀθηνᾷ· ἐκείνη τε γὰρ τὸν Ὀδυσσέα τὸν αὐτὸν ὄντα ἄλλοτε ἀλλοῖον ἐποίει φαίνεσθαι. Cf. section 2.4.3 n. 145 above.

the practical application of the theory: both men associate their ideal orator with real-life oratory rather than with epideictic showpieces. In their view, the versatile repertoire of the three styles fulfills its true potential in the lawsuits of the courts and in the deliberations of the political assemblies, where the stakes are really high.[139] Yet, the settings that Cicero refers to are not quite the same as those that Dionysius has in mind: the Roman deals with orations that are to be performed in front of the Roman crowds of the Forum, whereas the Greek seems to evoke speeches that are to be delivered in front of the Greek masses of the agora. This disparity underlies a fundamental difference in their appreciation of two out of the three styles: they disagree considerably about the proper application of plain and grand oratory. These considerations raise a fundamental question: does a Roman audience ask for a different approach than a congregation of Greek listeners?

That Cicero designs his theory of three styles for use on the Roman Forum is obvious from his frequent references to the religious, administrative, legal and social center of the ancient city. He describes his ideal orator as 'the man who is able to speak on the Forum and in public trials (*in foro causisque civilibus*) so as to prove, to please and to sway'. He attributes the greatest power to the grand style, because 'it is the one thing of all that avails most in winning verdicts (*ad obtinendas causas*)'. Throughout his *Orator*, Cicero is only interested in 'real cases' (*verae causae*) and in the 'struggles of the Forum' (*forenses contentiones*).[140] Hence, he virtually glosses over the intermediate style, as we have seen, because it was not indigenous to the Forum, springing from the 'sources of the sophists' (*sophistarum fontes*).[141] Likewise, he advises his orator against imitating the styles of philosophers, historians and epideictic speakers, as their styles are not readily usable 'for public use on the Forum' (*ad forensem usum et publicum*) or 'in the reality of public cases' (*in veritate causarum*).[142] For Cicero, then, the Roman Forum stands for the gritty, cutthroat reality, in which true eloquence can shine.

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[139] The opposition between epideictic oratory on the one hand and judicial and deliberative oratory on the other hand is already present in the distinction between the 'written style' (λέξις γραφική) and the 'performative style' (λέξις ἀγωνιστική) in Arist. *Rh.* 3.12: see esp. Innes (2007) 151–156 and Ooms and De Jonge (2013) 100–101.

[140] Phrases such as the ones quoted above permeate Cic. *Orat.* For a selection of passages, see ibid. 12, 30, 37, 38, 63, 69, 120, 208, 209, 221, 225.

[141] Cic. *Orat.* 96. Cf. *Brut.* 37, which discusses the oratory of Demetrius of Phalerum, Cicero's prime exponent of middle-style oratory, in a similar vein: he is said to have emerged into the 'heat and dust of the action' (*in solem et pulverem*) 'from the comfortable shadows' (*ex umbraculis*) of Theophrastus' school, not 'from a soldier's tent' (*e militari tabernaculo*). Cf. section 3.2.2 above, esp. n. 45–46.

[142] See Cic. *Orat.* 37–38, 62–64 (on epideictic oratory), 39–42, 66 (on historiography), and 65 (on philosophy).

Like his Roman predecessor, Dionysius prefers high-stakes action over detached leisure: according to the Greek critic, 'contests' (ἀγῶνες) and the concomitant 'contest-speeches' (ἐναγώνιοι λόγοι) constitute the ideal breeding ground of oratorical excellence. Specifically, Dionysius refers to speeches delivered before 'the public assemblies (ἐκκλησίαι), the courts (δικαστήρια) and other meetings where there is need of civic speeches (πολιτικοὶ λόγοι)'.[143] Unlike Cicero, however, Dionysius does not seem to have the Roman Forum in mind, when he refers to these institutions. Rather, he appeals particularly to Greek democracy and patriotism: he is still overwhelmed, for instance, when he picks up the rant against king Philip in Demosthenes' *Third Olynthiac*, and he becomes a 'patriotic supporter of democracy' (φιλόπολίς τε καὶ φιλόδημος), when he reads the antibarbarian rhetoric of Isocrates' *Panegyricus*. Apparently, Dionysius especially admires those speeches that, centuries after their initial delivery, still incite philhellenic sentiments in their audience.[144] This does not, of course, preclude the possibility that Dionysius addresses the orators of the Forum: after all, the Roman aristocrats Metilius Rufus and Q. Aelius Tubero are among the addressees of his critical essays. Still, it is incontestable that the critic only discusses Greek literary works in their Greek context.[145] Incidentally, Metilius Rufus had ample opportunity to put Dionysius' teachings about Greek rhetoric into practice: in his political career, he functioned as proconsul of Achaea and, possibly, as legate of Galatia.[146]

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[143] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 15.2: Αἱ ἐκκλησίαι καὶ τὰ διακαστήρια καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι σύλλογοι, ἔνθα πολιτικῶν δεῖ λόγων. For the use of ἀγών and cognates to refer to speeches in the context of debate, that is, to judicial and deliberative oratory, see Ooms and De Jonge (2013) 100–102. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 18.5 refers to the speakers in such situations as 'contestants' (ἀθληταί), who need a 'firm grip' (ἰσχυραὶ ἁφαί) and an 'ineluctable hold' (ἄφυκτοι λαβαί). On Dionysius' conception of 'civic discourse' (πολιτικὸς λόγος), see n. 144 below.

[144] See Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 22.4–7 (cf. section 2.2 n. 21 above) and *Isoc.* 5.1–4. Wiater (2011) adduces these passages, when he claims that Dionysius' classicism is a 'model for Greek cultural identity', which aims to separate Greek and Roman audiences: this dissertation, esp. section 1.2 above, objects to this view on account of the numerous connections between the views of Dionysius and Cicero: cf. section 5.5.2 below on the praise of Rome in *Ant. orat.* 3.1–3. We should note that Isoc. *Paneg.* is not a 'contest-speech' (λόγος ἐναγώνιος) but an epideictic speech: cf. n. 139 and 143 above. Yet, as Wiater (2011) 65–77 points out, the oration counts as a 'civic discourse' (πολιτικὸς λόγος), which Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 15.2 places in the same category as judicial and deliberative speeches: according to Dionysius, πολιτικοὶ λόγοι are all discourses that embody the civic virtues of Classical Greece.

[145] On the Greek and/or Roman context of Dionysius' critical treatises, see section 1.2 above. On his Greek and Roman addressees, see section 1.5 above.

[146] See Bowersock (1965) 132 n. 2, cf. section 1.5 n. 91 above. Goudriaan (1989) 29–37 shows that the old institutions of Classical Greece, viz., the people's assembly (ἐκκλησία), the council (βουλή) and the lawcourts

What do our sources have to say about the make-up of the crowds that flock together into the Roman Forum and the Greek agoras respectively in order to participate in the various public gatherings? Both Cicero and Dionysius touch on this topic in their critical works: interestingly, they divide the listeners, Roman or Greek, roughly into the same two groups. Cicero, for one, notes that the orator has to deal with the 'judgment of experts' (*iudicium intellegentium*, *iudicium sapientium*) as well as with the 'judgment of the crowd' (*iudicium vulgi*) which consists largely of 'untrained people' (*imperiti*).[147] Likewise, Dionysius distinguishes between a minority of 'outstanding intellectual geniuses' (δεινοὶ καὶ περιττοί), who are 'well-versed in public life, having gone through a broad education' (οἱ πολιτικοί τε καὶ ἀπ' ἀγορᾶς καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐγκυκλίου παιδείας ἐληλυθότες) and a majority of 'laymen who have no experience of how a good speech is composed' (ἰδιῶται καὶ κατασκευῆς λόγων γενναίων ἄπειροι).[148] Cicero and Dionysius often refer to this distinction between laymen and experts: as we will see in the chapter about word arrangement, they both argue that the ignorant masses rely on the 'irrational criterion of perception' (ἄλογος αἴσθησις, *tacitus sensus*), while the experts can fall back on a theoretically underpinned rational judgment, when they evaluate the quality of artistic prose (sections 4.1 and 4.3).

Thus, when an orator delivers a public speech before a large crowd of people—be they Romans or Greeks—he has to take into account both the uneducated masses and the cultural elite. According to Cicero and Dionysius, the orator can tackle this problem by drawing rhetorical devices from various stylistic registers, using the convenient repertoire of the three styles. Dionysius addresses this topic, as we have seen, in his discussion of the three types of

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(δικαστήρια), were still active during the Hellenistic and Roman eras, be it that they came to function as obsolete symbols of a free democracy that no longer existed: cf. also Heldmann (1982) 98–122, who adopts a pessimistic view about the state of eloquence in Dionysius' day. Yet, on the basis of *Acts* 19:23–40, Goudriaan shows that rhetoric was still very much alive in the cities of the Greek East: thus, Dionysius' focus on judicial and deliberative oratory was by no means purely nostalgic, but it could serve a practical purpose in his own days.

[147] Cic. *Brut.* 183–200 argues that the judgment of the ignorant crowd always coincides with the judgment of the literary experts: in his view, both groups can instinctively distinguish between good and bad oratory, although only the latter group is capable of substantiating its opinions. The whole discussion prepares for Cicero's attack against the self-styled Atticists in *Brut.* 283–291: according to the rhetorician, Calvus and his followers are content with pleasing a handful of experts, neglecting the judgment of the masses. Cf. *De or.* 3.195–199. Schenkeveld (1988) conveniently summarizes Cicero's discussions of the 'judgment of the crowd' (*iudicium vulgi*) in *De or.* and *Brut.*, showing that the Roman critic draws on the Greek concept of 'irrational perception' (ἄλογος αἴσθησις): see esp. section 4.1 n. 5 and section 4.4 n. 56 and 62 below.

[148] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 15.2–4. Cf. section 3.5 above for a discussion of Dionysius' insistence on a universal style.

diction, advocating a judicious mixture of elevated and plain vocabulary: he explains that simple, everyday words appeal to the common folk, whereas extravagant, striking vocabulary pleases people of refinement (section 3.5). Cicero, however, tells a rather different story: according to him, the plain style appeals to the elite, not to the masses. The Roman author reports that the self-styled Atticists, fervent champions of simple, unadorned oratory, receive 'critical acclaim' (*approbationes*) for their stylistic frugality and that they enjoy a reputation of wisdom (*prudentia*) on this account.[149] He associates the grand style, conversely, with the unschooled crowd: Cicero argues that the Atticists might be able to earn the 'assent of the few' (*paucorum approbatio*), but that they will never acquire the 'admiration of the masses' (*assensus vulgi*). In order to win over the crowd, a richer, more ornate style is required, or, in Cicero's words: 'The benches call for a louder and fuller voice.'[150]

Concerning their appreciation of simple and elevated oratory, Cicero and Dionysius seem to be diametrically opposed to each other. Their disagreement can be explained on two accounts. To start with, it is the inevitable outcome of their divergent interpretations of the extreme types of diction (section 3.2). As we have seen, Dionysius explains the contrast between the simple and the elevated style as one between 'familiar' (συνήθης) and 'natural' (φυσικός) language on the one hand, and 'extraordinary' (ἐξηλλαγμένος) and 'strange' (ξενός) language on the other hand (tables 2 and 5): laymen, whose literary expertise is limited, naturally feel more comfortable with the former, whereas experts, who like to be challenged intellectually, are more pleased with the latter. Cicero, conversely, describes the

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[149] Cic. *Orat.* 236: 'To express my opinion briefly, the fact of the matter is that to speak with well-knit rhythm without ideas is folly, to present ideas without order and rhythm in the language is to be speechless; but such a kind of speechlessness that those who use it could be considered, not stupid, but on the whole wise (*res se autem sic habet, ut brevissime dicam quod sentio: composite et apte sine sententiis dicere insania est, sententiose autem sine verborum et ordine et modo infantia, ut ea qui utantur non stulti homines haberi possint, etiam plerumque prudentes*). In the same passage, Cicero adds that the perfect orator should not merely aim for 'approval' (*approbationes*) but also for 'admiration, cheers and applause' (*admirationes, clamores, plausus*): the latter can, in his view, only be incited by an orator who is prepared to use every stylistic trick in the book: cf. section 2.3.2 above on Cicero's discussion of Demosthenes' success in his use of the grand style.

[150] For the appreciation of the Atticists' rhetoric by experts and laymen, see Cic. *Brut.* 191. See also ibid. 289: *Subsellia grandiorem et pleniorem vocem desiderant*. Hendrickson in Hendrickson and Hubbell (1962) 252 notes that the presence of 'benches' (*subsellia*) indicates a large trial; in private cases, the parties would remain standing. Cicero ridicules the Atticists' failures to please large crowds: 'When these Atticists of ours speak, they are deserted not only by the curious crowd, which is humiliating enough, but even by the friends and supporters of their clients' (*at cum isti Attici dicunt, non modo a corona, quod est ipsum miserabile, sed etiam ab advocatis relinquuntur*).

plain style as 'astute' (*acutus*), designed to 'prove' (*probare*), whereas he characterizes the grand style as 'passionate' (*vehemens*), aiming to 'sway' (*flectere*) the audience (tables 1 and 3): the connoisseurs who build their judgment on rational analysis feel at home in the former style, but the masses, who rely on their instincts, are sensitive to impassioned orations. Needless to say, Cicero's insistence that the grand style is the most powerful in winning big cases in front of large crowds, corroborates the defense of his own opulent style against the sustained objections of his Atticist opponents.

In addition, the disagreement between Cicero and Dionysius reveals a difference between Greek and Roman audiences in the first century BC: each group seems to react rather differently to classicizing prose, which draws on the works of literary masters who had been dead for centuries. It is mind-boggling to realize that Cicero, Dionysius and their contemporaries advocated the imitation of authors who were at least as old to them as William Shakespeare is to modern speakers of English: would the participants in a creative writing course today be advised to imitate the Bard's timeworn stylistic intricacies? For Greek audiences, this issue was not as pressing as for their Roman coevals: even after so many years, the straightforward style of Lysias was still more accessible than the convoluted sentences of Thucydides. Therefore, Dionysius can commend the imitation of the former in addressing the hoi polloi, while he urges those who aim to appeal to literary specialists to study the latter. It is not surprising that Dionysius—as well as, no doubt, his fellow Greek scholars—considered Lysianic language to be suitable 'for practical use' (εἰς χρῆσιν), while they regarded Thucydidean prose as particularly apt 'for permanent literary value' (εἰς ἀνάθημα καὶ κτῆμα).[151]

For Cicero and the native speakers of Latin, however, the age-old works of Lysias, Thucydides and the other exponents of Classical Greek literature might have been equally hard to understand. Hence, the Roman Atticists' predilection for Lysias is not born from a desire to appeal to large crowds of unlettered people: rather, we will see that they chose Lysias as their preferred model, because they saw in his prose the embodiment of Attic purity, masculinity and moderation (section 5.6). Cicero, on the other hand, warns his readers that such monuments for Classical Attic orators might please the literature buffs of Rome, but that these works are ultimately unsuccessful on the Forum.[152] He tells a cautionary tale about the

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[151] Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 10.3. The passage mockingly alludes to Thuc. 1.22.4: 'My work has been composed, not as a prize-essay to be heard for the moment, but as a possession for all time' (κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται).

[152] For the failure of the Atticists to please large crowds, see n. 150 above.

poet Antimachus of Colophon, who, in the midst of reciting an obscure poem, noticed that all his listeners had left except for Plato, whereupon he remarked: 'I shall go on reading just the same; for me, Plato alone is as good as a hundred thousand.'[153] In Cicero's view, his Athenophile opponents alienate their audience by committing themselves with relentless zeal to the imitation of an antique literary model.[154] Whereas imitations of Lysias came across as plain and straightforward to Greeks, they could be condemned as elitist—or, alternatively, praised as sophisticated—by Romans.

A Roman audience, in conclusion, indeed calls for a different approach than a Greek audience: the imitation of the Greek models for the plain and grand stylistic registers had different effects on the crowds of the Roman Forum than on the masses of the Greek agoras. Apparently, the sober style of a Lysias was music for the millions among the Greeks, whereas it catered for a select group of intellectuals among the Romans. An opulent style, conversely, could be regarded as pretentious in the Greek courts and assemblies, and as crowd-pleasing in the meetings of Roman institutions.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the notion, articulated by several Greek and Roman authors, that there exist three types of style, or stylistic registers. We have seen that this idea is integral to the stylistic discourse of Late-Republican and Augustan Rome: indeed, such threefold divisions are not attested before the first century BC, and later sources seem to retain them solely on the authority of Cicero and Varro. Attempts by modern classicists to trace the origins and early development of the three-style formula have been unconvincing, simply because there did not exist a uniform doctrine of three styles. Rather, the extant articulations of the triple scheme show that the three styles provide a flexible framework that could be interpreted in various ways according to the specific purposes, preferences and programs of its users. Hence, we have seen that Cicero, Dionysius, Varro and the author of *Rhetorica ad*

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[153] Cic. *Brut.* 191: *Legam nihilo minus; Plato enim mihi unus instar est centum milium.* Antimachus probably flourished during the Peloponnesian War, he authored an epic poem *Thebais*, in at least five volumes, and an elegiac poem *Lyde*, and he was famous for his predilection for glosses: see Matthews (1996) 64–76. The anecdote about Plato's approval and the rejection of the public is also related by Plut. *Lys.* 18.

[154] Cf. section 4.5 below for Cicero's view on the development of oratorical style: according to him, the orators of his day had a formidable arsenal of stylistic devices at their disposal: speakers who chose not to avail themselves of it, ran the risk of alienating their audience. For the religious zeal of Calvus and his fellow-Atticists, see section 5.6.1 below.

Herennium use a diverse palette of nouns and adjectives to define each of their three styles. Moreover, this chapter has shown that Cicero and Dionysius each agilely connect their stylistic triad to several of their other rhetorical doctrines, and that they put it to use to make sense of the overwhelming literary legacy of Classical Greece. In the hands of our Greek and Roman authors, the theory of three styles is a versatile tool with an enormous potential.

More than anything else, the authors use the malleable three-style categorization as a generous source for arguments in their rhetorical and critical treatises. For Cicero, the triple scheme provides him with several expedient arguments in his polemic with the self-styled Attic orators who rose to prominence in the late 50s BC; his discussion focuses specifically on the simple and grand styles. Dionysius, conversely, concentrates on the concept of the intermediate style, which he sometimes presents as a sort of Aristotelian mean, sometimes as a mixture of the two extreme styles: we have seen that the Greek critic is not worried about the consistency of his doctrines, as long as they serve his purpose of defining the perfect, all-round and universal type of style. Lastly, the stylistic discussions of Cicero and Dionysius show that Greek audiences respond differently to the grandeur and simplicity of classicizing prose than their Roman counterparts: what is mainstream among Greeks, is considered niche by Romans, and vice versa. The next chapter will build on the foregoing discussion of the three styles: I will focus on the topic of word arrangement, which Dionysius, as we have seen, divides in a rough, a smooth and a mixed type. Specifically, I will focus on the first of these categories: notwithstanding the standard view that classical literature is full of agreeable charm, I will be looking for its jarring harshness.