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Jonge, C.C. de; Hunter, R.L.

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CHAPTER 10

Dionysius and Horace: Composition in Augustan Rome

Casper C. de Jonge

Dionysius' *On Composition* between Greece and Rome

Dionysius' major treatise Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων, *On the Arrangement of Words* or simply *On Composition*,[1] is the only extant work from antiquity that is exclusively devoted to the stylistic arrangement of words. Dionysius' systematic exposition on the four means of composition (melody, rhythm, variety, propriety), the two aims of composition (attractiveness, ἡ ἡδονή, and beauty, τὸ καλόν) and the three types of composition or 'harmonies' (ἁρμονίαι) presents itself as a technical handbook for students of rhetoric.[2] But the treatise differs from Dionysius' other rhetorical works in its wide scope. Whereas most of his criticism concentrates on Attic oratory and historiography, this work examines a wide range of passages in Greek literature, covering different genres, periods and dialects. Dionysius' preferred models of stylistic composition include not only prose authors like Demosthenes (presented as the best and most complete orator in *On the Ancient Orators*), but also Euripides, Aristophanes and lyric poets such as Simonides, the 'austere' Pindar and the 'smooth' Sappho.[3] Dionysius' incontestable champion of stylistic composition, however, is Homer: the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are generously cited throughout the treatise.

Traditionally, *On Composition* is understood as a characteristic product of the Greek tradition of rhetorical theory and literary criticism.[4] This Hellenocentric perspective is obviously in agreement with Dionysius'

[1] Grube 1965, 217: 'our critic's masterpiece'. Important studies on *Comp.* are Roberts 1910, Pohl 1968; Donadi and Marchiori 2014. Translations of Dionysius in this chapter are adapted from Usher 1974–1985. Translations of Horace are adapted from Freudenburg 1993 (*Satires*) and Russell in Russell and Winterbottom 1972 (*Ars Poetica*), with consultation of Fairclough 1926. I wish to thank Richard Hunter for his valuable suggestions on an earlier version of this chapter.

[2] *Comp.* 10–11: the two aims; *Comp.* 12–16: melody; *Comp.* 17–18: rhythm; *Comp.* 19: variety; *Comp.* 20: appropriateness; *Comp.* 21–4: the three harmonies.

[3] See the indexes in Roberts 1910, 353; Aujac and Lebel 1981, 229–30. On Demosthenes as Dionysius' preferred model of oratory, see Yunis in this volume, pp. 84–5.

[4] E.g., Aujac and Lebel 1981, 34–41; De Jonge 2008, 41–8.

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presentation of his own project: he writes in Greek, he cites Greek (and no Latin) literature and he places himself in a scholarly tradition that goes back all the way to Plato's *Cratylus*.[5] In his treatise Dionysius explicitly refers to several Greek predecessors who developed theories on language, music, metre and rhetoric, including Aristotle, Theodectes, Theophrastus, Aristoxenus, Aristophanes of Byzantium and Chrysippus of Soli.[6] Hellenistic critics of poetry also influenced Dionysius' thought, although he does not mention them: *On Composition* clearly builds on the theories of the so-called *kritikoi* who are cited in Philodemus' *On Poems* (on which more below). Whereas their debates on sense, sound and composition (σύνθεσις) focused on the quality of good poetry, Dionysius' teaching aims to help students to compose effective and beautiful prose: his principal concern is the genre of πολιτικοὶ λόγοι (public eloquence: *Comp.* 1.3).[7]

While it thus remains important to study Dionysius' work in relation to the views of earlier Greek theorists, this chapter aims to cast new light on the treatise *On Composition* by adopting a synchronic, Roman perspective. Dionysius wrote a Greek treatise about word arrangement in Greek literature; but he published the work in Rome, and he addressed it to a young Roman student called Metilius Rufus.[8] Despite its focus on the literature of archaic and classical Greece, *On Composition* is thus a work with a Roman context and for a Roman audience. We should therefore feel encouraged to ask how this Greek treatise fits into the intellectual environment of Augustan Rome. What could a Roman student like Metilius Rufus learn from it?[9] And did Dionysius' teachings on stylistic writing conform – or perhaps even respond – to the theory and practice of (Greek and) Latin authors in Rome?[10] This chapter will argue that Dionysius' literary criticism can indeed be fruitfully interpreted as participating in the discourse of Roman literature under Augustus. The aim of this contribution is to identify a number of intriguing parallels between the technical language, the aesthetic assumptions and the literary theories of Dionysius and Horace, two contemporary authors in Rome, who were both deeply interested in the nature and

[5] *Comp.* 16.4 mentions Plato's *Cratylus* as an authoritative text on etymology.

[6] Cf. De Jonge 2008, 34–41; the index in Aujac and Lebel 1981, 225–8.

[7] On the *kritikoi* known to us from Philodemus, see Porter 1995; Janko 2000, 120–89; on Dionysius and the *kritikoi*: the introduction and Viidebaum in this volume, pp. 22–3 and 114–15.

[8] *Comp.* 1.4. On the identity of Metilius Rufus, see below, p. 247.

[9] Weaire 2012 examines the pedagogical relationship between Dionysius and Metilius Rufus, focusing on the ways in which a Greek teacher of a Roman student establishes his authority.

[10] On Dionysius' knowledge of Latin, see *Ant. Rom.* 1.7.2; cf. De Jonge 2008, 60.

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the effects of good writing.[11] *On Composition* was written at the end of the first century BC, roughly in the same period as the *Ars Poetica,* which is dated around 20 or 10 BC and may have been the poet's last work.[12] We do not know which work was published first; in what follows, we will not attempt to trace direct influence from one work to the other, but rather demonstrate that both works participate in the literary discourse of Augustan Rome.

Some scholars have already recognized connections between Horace and Dionysius. Kirk Freudenburg has shown that Dionysius' composition theory casts light on the poetic theory of Horace's *Satires* (as we will see below).[13] Richard Hunter has demonstrated that there are remarkable parallels between Dionysius' literary theory and Horace's *Odes*.[14] Their views on literary imitation (μίμησις), their analogies between writing and painting and their evaluations of Pindar and Sappho all suggest, as Hunter states, that Dionysius and Horace 'are in touch with similar streams of criticism'.[15] He concludes that 'further close attention to Dionysius may reveal that we can know more about the interaction of Augustan criticism and Augustan poetry than is often believed'.[16] Following this suggestion, this chapter will explore the relationship between Horace's *Ars Poetica* and Dionysius' *On Composition*, adopting the style of a Dionysian σύγκρισις.[17] The first part of this chapter will present a general comparison of Dionysius and Horace, their place within Augustan Rome and their literary theories. The second part will concentrate on what may be called the central theme of composition theory in both Dionysius and Horace: the idea that the best and most beautiful style is achieved by a skillful arrangement of common words.

Dionysius and Horace

We should of course not ignore the differences between our two authors and their works. *De compositione verborum* is a technical rhetorical treatise

[11] Fuhrer 2003 shows that Horace's poetry can be regarded as a product of the lively debate (in poetry, philosophy and literary criticism) on 'good poetry' in the first century BC; she briefly mentions Dionysius and his views on composition (Fuhrer 2003, 355–6), but concentrates on the (complex) connections between Horace and Philodemus' *On Poems*.

[12] *Comp.* belongs to the middle period of Dionysius' works: see Bonner 1939, 25–38; De Jonge 2008, 20 n. 100; the absolute date is unknown. On the date of *Ars P.*, see Rudd 1989, 19–21; Frischer 1991, 17–49; Reinhardt 2013, 500.

[13] Freudenburg 1993, 109–84. Cf. Fuhrer 2003, 355–6.

[14] Hunter 2009, 124–7 on *Carm.* 4.1–2 and *Comp.* 22–3. [15] Hunter 2009, 115.

[16] Hunter 2009, 124. [17] Cf. Dionysius' comparison of Herodotus and Thucydides in *Pomp.* 3.

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with a systematic structure, which focuses on one specific aspect of style (composition, not diction or figures). Horace's letter to the Pisones, on the other hand, is a poem with a loose, associative structure, which deals with a great variety of topics related to the composition of poetry, including content, style and the figure of the poet. The genre of *Ars Poetica* remains a matter of dispute: epistle, didactic poem or something else; perhaps even a parody of a Peripatetic treatise.[18]

In his monumental commentary on the *Ars Poetica*, Brink emphasizes the differences between rhetoric and poetics.[19] It has become almost a commonplace to state that the *Ars Poetica*, despite the title used by Quintilian (*Inst.* 8.3.60), is *not* a handbook of literary theory.[20] No reader will deny that Horace's poem is much more than a treatise versified.[21] However, while completely accepting the formal differences between a complex, subtle and ironical Latin poem and a Greek handbook on rhetorical composition, we should not close our eyes to the remarkable correspondences between the *Ars Poetica* and treatises of Greek rhetorical and poetical theory. Various scholars have indeed pointed out parallels between the *Ars Poetica* and contemporary Greek literary theory in Rome. Many readers are now happy to understand the *Ars Poetica* as responding – in a variety of ways – to the teachings of Philodemus' *On Poems*.[22] Doreen Innes has identified structural parallels between the *Ars Poetica* and Longinus' *On the Sublime*.[23] And last but not least, Niall Rudd has noted a close resemblance between one specific section of Horace's poem (119–52) and Dionysius' discussion of the tasks of the historian in the *Letter to Pompeius*.[24]

A comparison between Dionysius and Horace is in fact not so far-fetched as the scarce references to Dionysius in Brink's commentary might suggest. It is true that Dionysius primarily writes for 'all those who aim to become good orators' (*Comp.* 1.3–4), but his examples of pleasant and beautiful composition, as we have seen, are drawn from

[18] On the elusive genre of *Ars P.*, see Frischer 1991, 87–100 (and 61 for the 'parody' theory); Hardie 2014, 43.
[19] Brink 1971, 139 on *Ars P.* 47–8.
[20] Rudd 1989, 34; Armstrong 1993, 189. Laird 2007, 135 'resists' referring to the *Ars Poetica* as a 'treatise', but accepts the parallels between Horace and Longinus suggested by Innes 1995, 11–12 (see below).
[21] Cf. Russell 1973, 114.
[22] See, e.g., Armstrong 1993; Fuhrer 2003. Janko 2000, 10 boldly states that 'there should be no doubt that Horace had read and absorbed the *On Poems*'.
[23] Innes 1995, 111–12 compares the structure of Horace's *Ars P.* and Longinus' *Subl.*: both authors 'subvert' a formal superstructure.
[24] Rudd 1989, 22 n. 25 notes that *Pomp.* is 'a work close in time' to the *Ars P.*

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poetry as well as prose. Dionysius repeatedly claims that his teachings are valuable for 'prose writers *and* poets', Homer is presented as the champion of word arrangement, and the final chapters of his treatise (*Comp.* 25–6) in particular explore the resemblances between good prose and poetry.[25]

Both Horace and Dionysius were influenced by Aristotelian as well as Hellenistic ideas on poetry. Dionysius builds on the stylistic theories of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and Theophrastus' *On Style*; the *Ars Poetica* draws on material familiar to us from Aristotle's *Poetics*, even if Horace was probably not familiar with the latter text (nor was Dionysius).[26] The Hellenistic influence on both texts is substantial, though more difficult to assess. In the scholarship on both Horace and Dionysius, one learned Greek man plays a crucial role (although neither of our authors ever mentions him): the Epicurean philosopher, poet, rhetorician and literary critic Philodemus of Gadara (110–35 BC), who studied in Athens and worked in Italy from ca. 55 BC. The fragments of his rich oeuvre have survived in the damaged papyrus scrolls of the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum. Philodemus' work *On Poems*, with its critical discussion of the Hellenistic *kritikoi*, will be especially relevant to our comparison of Dionysius and Horace.[27]

The commentator Porphyrio, as is well known, informs us that Horace incorporated 'the most conspicuous precepts' of Neoptolemus of Parium (third century BC).[28] Neoptolemus is one of the critics who are cited in Philodemus' *On Poems*, the fragments of which show significant points of contact with both the *Ars Poetica* and Dionysius' *On Composition.*[29] A direct link between Philodemus and Horace seems to be secured by the fact that Horace addresses his poem to the family of the Pisones: two *iuvenes* and their father, who may be identified either as Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, consul in 58 BC, the father-in-law of Julius Caesar, and, more importantly for our purposes, the patron of Philodemus, or as his son, Lucius Calpurnius Piso Pontifex, who was consul in 15 BC, and the

[25] For 'poets and prose writers', see, e.g., *Comp.* 3.1. On the relation between prose and poetry in *Comp.* 25–6, see De Jonge 2008, 329–66.

[26] For Peripatetic influence on Dionysius, see Bonner 1938; De Jonge 2008, 34–5; cf. Yunis in this volume, pp. 96–8, and Fox in this volume, pp. 191–3, on Aristotelian recognition in *Ant. Rom.* For Peripatetic influence on Horace, see Brink 1963, 79–134; Reinhardt 2013, 505–8. Both Dionysius and Horace may have been familiar with Aristotle's *On Poets* (now lost).

[27] On Philodemus and Dionysius, see the introduction to this volume, pp. 25–6.

[28] Porphyrio, *Comm. in Hor.* ad *Ars P.* 1, p. 162, 6–7 Holder: *in quem librum congessit praecepta Neoptolemi* τοῦ Παριανοῦ *de arte poetica, non quidem omnia sed eminentissima*. On this much debated testimony, see Brink 1963, 43–78; Russell 1973, 114; Rudd 1989, 23–5; Reinhardt 2013, 504–5.

[29] Neoptolemus is discussed in Phld. *On Poems* 5.

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patron of Antipater of Thessalonica.[30] A clear connection between Philodemus and Dionysius is less easy to establish; Dionysius dislikes 'the chorus of Epicureans' – which might be one reason for him to be silent about his well-known Greek colleague, who was slightly older and well respected among the Roman elite;[31] but it is beyond doubt that his theory of σύνθεσις builds on the work of the critics who are discussed in Philodemus' *On Poems*.[32]

Just like Horace, Dionysius writes for an influential Roman family: he presents *On Composition* as a birthday present for his student Metilius Rufus, who (as we know) was to become proconsul of Achaea under emperor Augustus.[33] The father of Metilius Rufus, whom Dionysius praises as the 'most esteemed' of his friends, may have acted as his patron (*Comp.* 1.4). In short, both Horace's poem and Dionysius' treatise are firmly embedded in the social, cultural and political context of Augustan Rome. If these two works can be shown to stand partly in the same tradition, Philodemus' *On Poems* might well be regarded as one of their common ancestors.

De Compositione Verborum* and *Ars Poetica

Let us consider a number of common themes that we find in Dionysius' *On Composition* and Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Some of these themes are traditional topics or even commonplaces in Greek and Roman rhetoric and criticism; other parallels reflect special interests of the first century BC, perhaps even the literary tastes of the Augustan Age. We do not need to assume that Horace and Dionysius borrow such themes from specific sources, nor do we have to believe that there was direct influence between the Greek critic and the Roman poet, even if some of the correspondences are indeed suggestive. It is enough for present purposes that Dionysius and Horace participate in the same discourse of poetics and literary criticism in Augustan Rome. Ideas, theories and literary values were exchanged in a great variety of ways, involving many Greek and Roman individuals: on the one hand, there were various contexts that provided opportunities for

[30] Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus: Frischer 1991, 52–9; Lucius Calpurnius Piso Pontifex: Rudd 1989, 19; Armstrong 1993, 199–200. On Philodemus and Horace, see Frischer 1991, 64–6; Armstrong 1993, 190–9; Armstrong and Oberhelman 1995, 235–6; Janko 2000, 10 (cited above, n. 22); Fuhrer 2003, 350–64; Armstrong 2004; Laird 2007, 134–5.

[31] See *Comp.* 24.8. Cf. De Jonge 2008, 37.

[32] Dionysius and the *kritikoi* in Philodemus' *On Poems*: Aujac and Lebel 1989, 39–41; Janko 2000, 178; Fuhrer 2003, 256; De Jonge 2008, 44–6, 193–6, 362–5.

[33] On the identity of Metilius Rufus, see Bowersock 1965, 132. Cf. Wiater in this volume, p. 74.

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oral exchange, for instance the professional teaching of rhetoricians (e.g., Dionysius himself, or someone like Apollodorus of Pergamon, Augustus' instructor) and literary circles like the groups around Maecenas and Messalla or the network in which Dionysius and his Greek and Roman friends participated – I will return to Dionysius' addressees and colleagues at the end of this chapter.[34] On the other hand, the exchange will also have taken place via written texts of different kinds – private letters, poems, treatises.[35] The *Ars Poetica* and *On Composition* were both stimulants to and products of this literary discourse in Rome: we will see that the two works adopt similar motives, while playing with them in different ways.

The first category of parallels consists of ideas that Horace and Dionysius share with several earlier (and later) writers on rhetoric and poetry; in many cases these parallels can be traced back to Aristotle or the Peripatetic tradition. Such themes include the well-known question about the roles of 'art' and 'nature' (*ars* and *natura* or *ingenium* / φύσις and τέχνη) in the process of composition. Aristotle had already raised this question in connection with Homer.[36] Horace and Dionysius, like most critics, believe that there should be a balance and a fruitful cooperation between art and nature.[37] Another central idea in both writers that is linked with the Peripatetic tradition is the important concept of appropriateness (*aptum, decor* / τὸ πρέπον). Dionysius presents appropriateness as one of the four means of composition, next to melody, rhythm and variation (*Comp.* 20). He focuses on the ways in which stylistic composition (vocal and rhythmical patterns in particular) can properly (i.e., mimetically) express subject matter, as when Homer represents Sisyphus' labors in spondaic rhythms and rough sounds.[38] Dionysius acknowledges that other aspects of τὸ πρέπον are also important: 'appropriateness is that treatment which is fitting for the underlying characters and actions' (τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις προσώποις τε καὶ πράγμασιν); thus different emotions (anger, cheerfulness, lamentation, fear) require different types of word arrangement.[39] In the *Ars Poetica* appropriateness is at least as important a concept. Like Dionysius, Horace states that metrical form should correspond to subject

[34] On Dionysius' network, see Hidber 1996, 1–8; De Jonge 2008, 25–34.
[35] Fuhrer 2003, 352 adopts a similar concept of 'poetological discourse' in Rome.
[36] Arist. *Poet.* 8.1451a24.
[37] *Ars P.* 408–11; Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 47.2; cf. *Imit.* fr. 1 (φύσις, μάθησις, ἄσκησις). Longinus, *Subl.* 36.4 favours a 'holding together' (ἀλληλουχία) of art and nature (cf. *Subl.* 2). Cf. Ov. *Tr.* 2.424; for further parallels, see Rudd 1989, 217. On nature and art in Dionysius, see also Yunis and Wiater in this volume, pp. 66, 90.
[38] *Comp.* 20.8–22 on *Od.* 11.593–7.
[39] *Comp.* 20.3–4: ὀργιζόμενοι, χαίροντες, ὀλοφυρόμενοι, φοβούμενοι.

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matter (*Ars P.* 73–86, note *aptum* in 81). Elsewhere, he points out that speech should be appropriate to the age of different characters (153–78, note *decor* in 157, *aptis* in 178); and, like Dionysius, Horace thinks that style must properly express emotion: 'sad words suit (*decent*) a mournful countenance, threatening words an angry one; sportive words are for the playful, serious for the grave' (105–7). Solemnity here replaces fear, but the other three emotions (sadness, anger, cheerfulness) are identical to the ones mentioned by Dionysius. The concept of proportion also underlies Horace's views on poetic unity, formulated in the opening passage on the grotesque painting of a creature whose parts do not properly fit together (1–5).

To the same category of 'Peripatetic' correspondences between Horace and Dionysius belong two basic distinctions that are traditional in postclassical rhetoric and poetics. First, there is the division between subject matter and style, which goes back to Aristotle.[40] The distinction is essential to the stylistic treatises of Dionysius, who separates thoughts (νοήματα, ὁ πραγματικὸς τόπος) from words (ὀνόματα, ὁ λεκτικὸς τόπος).[41] This roughly corresponds to Neoptolemus' division between ποίησις (content, plot) and ποίημα (diction, style), which has been thought to underlie the structure of the *Ars Poetica* (with 45–118 treating style, 119–294 content).[42] More important for our purposes are Horace's explicit references to the distinction between *res* / *materia* and *uerba* (esp. 38–41). Secondly, there is the division between selection of words (or diction) and the arrangement of words (or composition), a distinction that is implicit in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and was presumably made explicit in Theophrastus' *On Style*.[43] Dionysius' treatise deals with composition (σύνθεσις) alone; we do not know if he ever fulfilled his promise to write the corresponding treatise on the selection of words (ἐκλογὴ ὀνομάτων), which he hoped to present to Metilius Rufus for his next birthday.[44] Horace naturally deals with both diction and composition (see esp. *Ars P.* 45–7, cited below).

When we look at the specific instructions offered on diction and composition, more parallels between Horace and Dionysius can be

[40] Arist. *Rh.* 3.1.1403b14-18: see Russell 1973, 114; Yunis in this volume, pp. 88–9.
[41] *Comp.* 1.5. Cf. Yunis in this volume, pp. 88–9.
[42] Russell 1973, 114–15 and Laird 2007, 135–6 are rightly cautious.
[43] Cf. Theophr. fr. 691 Fortenbaugh (= Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 3). The theory is implicit in Arist. *Rh.* 3.2–6 (diction) and 3.8–9 (composition): see Fortenbaugh 2005, 293. See also *Rh.* 3.2.1404b24-5 (ἐκλέγων συντιθῇ).
[44] See *Comp.* 1.8–10. On diction and composition, see De Jonge 2008, 53–4; Yunis in this volume p. 92.

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detected. For instance, both authors pay attention to the formation of new or innovative words, and in that context both authors immediately add that borrowing unusual words from earlier (Greek) writers can be more effective. Horace grants poetic license (*licentia*) to 'the fashioning of words never heard by the kilted Cethegi' (*fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis*), immediately adding that words will win easier acceptance if 'they spring from a Greek fount' (*Ars P.* 50–3). Dionysius states that poets and prose authors look at the subject matter and 'fashion words that suit it and illustrate it' (κατασκευάζουσιν . . . οἰκεῖα καὶ δηλωτικὰ τῶν ὑποκειμένων τὰ ὀνόματα); and then adds that 'they also borrow many (such) words from earlier writers' (πολλὰ δὲ καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἔμπροσθεν λαμβάνουσιν, *Comp.* 16.1). The focus is slightly different: Dionysius concentrates on mimetic language, Horace on neologisms; but they both argue that the Greek tradition lends authority to the introduction of unusual expressions.

A second category of parallels between *Ars Poetica* and *On Composition* may be related not so much to a common source or tradition, but rather to the cultural world of the authors and their audiences. Both Dionysius and Horace are ready to draw analogies between writing and the fine arts.[45] They are particularly fond of comparisons with painting, music and metalworking, to the extent that they expect their audience to be familiar with the technicalities of these arts. Even in the details these analogies are remarkably similar. Horace compares the poet who makes mistakes with a harper (*citharoedus*) who is laughed at when 'he always blunders on the same string' (*ridetur chorda qui semper oberrat eadem*, 356). Dionysius reports a similar story: 'I have seen an able and very renowned harpist booed (κιθαριστὴν θορυβηθέντα) by the public because he struck a single false note (χορδὴν ἀσύμφωνον)' (*Comp.* 11.8). If Dionysius really 'saw' this disappointing concert (he uses the word ἰδών), it may well have been somewhere in Rome, where there was indeed a large crowd for musical events; Cicero's *De Oratore* describes a similar scene.[46] Because of their immense popularity, musical performances could helpfully serve as accessible illustrations of the workings of aesthetic experience. Again, there are differences in the details. Horace believes that some faults are forgiven: 'the string (*chorda*) does not always yield the sound (*sonum*) that hand and mind intended' (*Ars P.* 348); Dionysius' harpist, on the other hand, was booed because a single false note spoiled the entire melody.

[45] For Dionysius' comparisons of texts with statues and paintings, see Viidebaum in this volume, pp. 112–14.
[46] *De or.* 3.196; see also *Orat.* 173.

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Another artistic analogy that connects *Ars Poetica* and *On Composition* is that of metalworking. Both Horace and Dionysius believe that writers should pay attention to the smallest details, and in order to prove their point both critics draw comparisons between writers and engravers, who imitate in bronze human nails and locks of hair:

> The poorest (*imus*) craftsman from the School of Aemilius will reproduce nails and mimic soft hair (*capillos*) in bronze, though he has no luck with the overall effect of his work, because he will not know how to organize the whole. (*Ars P.* 32–5)

Did Dionysius think of the same workshops in Rome when he compared Demosthenes' detailed attention to euphony to the subtle handwork of craftsmen?

> For it appears to me far more appropriate in a man who is composing political speeches, which are to be permanent memorials to his own powers, that he should not ignore even the smallest details, than it is for painters and engravers (ζωγράφων καὶ τορευτῶν παισίν), who display their manual skills and industry upon perishable materials, to exhaust the refinements of their artistry on fine veins, young plumage, the first beard's down (τὰ φλέβια καὶ τὰ πτίλα καὶ τὸν χνοῦν) and minute details of a similar character. (*Comp.* 25.35)[47]

The analogies serve opposite purposes: Horace underlines that for the composition of the whole one needs more than just skill in representing the details; Dionysius, on the other hand, argues that even the greatest artists pay due attention to the smallest details. But the examples (including the representation of human hair) are drawn from the same domain, and both Dionysius and Horace suggest a hierarchical contrast between the 'poor' craftsmen (note *imus*, 'poorest', 'lowest in esteem') and the more honorable class of writers: the Pisones and Metilius Rufus should identify, of course, with the latter group.[48]

This brings us to the third group of parallels between Horace and Dionysius, which can be primarily explained from the didactic character of their works: both authors present themselves as patient but stern professors, who repeatedly stimulate and encourage their students.[49] Dionysius refers to the daily exercises of young Metilius Rufus (*Comp.* 20.23, 26.17); Horace adopts the persona of an instructor – or perhaps, as

[47] For similar passages, see *Dem.* 50.4, 51.7.

[48] I follow Rudd 1989, 115 in my interpretation of *imus* (32). For different options, see Brink 1971, 117–18; Bentley reads *unus*.

[49] On the didactic aspects of *Ars P.*, see Hardie 2014; for those of *Comp.*, Weaire 2012.

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Frischer has argued, of a pedantic Peripatetic scholar – who regularly addresses the two younger Pisones.[50] Every teacher wants his students to work. It should therefore be no surprise that Horace's famous *limae labor et mora* ('the toil and tedium of the file', *Ars P.* 291) finds parallels in Dionysius' persistent emphasis on labor: he reminds his student(s) that Isocrates spent ten years on the composition of his *Panegyric*, and that Plato many times rewrote the first sentence of his *Republic*, until he had reached the best result (*Comp.* 25.32–3).

Our final category consists of some remarkable correspondences in the details of Horatian and Dionysian composition theory that cannot easily be paralleled from other extant sources. Hellenistic theories like those of the *kritikoi* may play a role here, and we should always allow for the possibility that such ideas were circulating more widely in Rome. I will mention two of these parallels; the second one will then be further examined in the remaining part of this chapter.

One striking agreement between Horace and Dionysius is their distinction between the aesthetic categories of beauty and attractiveness. Dionysius thinks that composition has two aims, namely τὸ καλόν and ἡ ἡδονή (*Comp.* 10; cf. *Dem.* 47). Horace claims that poems should not just be beautiful but also pleasing:

> non satis est pulchra esse poemata: dulcia sunto
> et quocumque uolent animum auditoris agunto.

> It is not enough for poetry to be beautiful; it must also be pleasing and lead the hearer's mind wherever it will. (*Ars P.* 99–100)

Horace is obviously alluding to Greek theory: *animum auditoris agunto*, as many scholars have noted, translates ψυχαγωγεῖν ('to lead the soul'). Commentators have also identified the agreement between Horace and Dionysius concerning the aesthetic aims of beauty and attractiveness. As often, Brink emphasizes the difference between Dionysius' 'technical' discussion and Horace's focus on emotions.[51] But on closer inspection, Dionysius' theory appears to be quite similar to that of Horace. Under beauty (τὸ καλόν) Dionysius lists impressiveness, dignity, solemnity, seriousness, dignity, mellowness and similar qualities; attractiveness (ἡ ἡδονή), on the other hand, appears through freshness, charm, euphony, sweetness and persuasiveness (*Comp.* 11.2). In other words, it is the

[50] Frischer 1991, 99. On Horace's didactic persona, see Hardie 2014, 46.

[51] Brink 1971, 183. Immisch 1932, 62–75 is more inclined to accept the similarities between the two passages. Greek ἡδύς and Latin *dulcis* have of course the same connotation of sweetness.

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attractiveness (ἡδονή) of a text that affects or carries away the reader, just as Horace's *dulcia* refers to the effect on the reader's soul. The term *pulchra* ('well made', Brink; 'formally correct', Rudd), on the other hand, denotes the intrinsic, formal quality of a poem. Rudd notes that 'a work with this quality alone would be impressive in a rather cold and austere way':[52] this formulation almost sums up Dionysius' description of a work that has beauty, but no attractiveness; the Greek critic specifically mentions the examples of Thucydides and Antiphon, who lack charm; Herodotus, on the other hand, has both beauty and attractiveness.

Finally, there is the idealization of skillful word arrangement, which establishes a close connection between our two authors.[53] Both Dionysius and Horace draw a contrast between ordinary, common words, on the one hand, and artful, 'clever' word arrangement, on the other.[54] In the remaining part of this chapter, I will argue that their emphasis on composition (*iunctura*, σύνθεσις) is indeed, as Donald Russell has observed, 'characteristically Augustan'.[55]

The preceding list of correspondences between Dionysius and Horace is not exhaustive. If we extend our view outside *On Composition* and *Ars Poetica*, parallels can also be found between Horace's *Odes* and *Satires* and Dionysius' other critical essays: these correspondences include traditional topics, such as the virtue of lucidity and the theme of organic unity, views on particular authors to be imitated (including Sappho and Pindar, the poetic models of smooth and austere composition) and more specifically the discourse of the sublime. The list of parallels shows that Dionysius and Horace are indeed, as Hunter has suggested, 'in touch with similar streams of criticism'.[56]

The Artful Arrangement of Common Words: Dionysius

The central message of *On Composition* is that skillful word arrangement (σύνθεσις or ἁρμονία) has more impact than the careful selection (ἐκλογή) of words:[57]

> Many poets and prose-writers, both philosophers and orators, have carefully chosen words (λέξεις) which are very beautiful and suited to their subject-

[52] Rudd 1989, 167. [53] See esp. *Ars P.* 47–8; *Comp.* 4.13 (cited below).
[54] Immisch 1932, 61–2 already noted that this theme is found in various ancient writers, including Horace and Dionysius, but also Philodemus and Longinus. Brink 1971, 139 on the other hand, emphasizes the differences: Horace does not discuss euphony, hiatus and rhythm.
[55] Russell 1973, 117. [56] Hunter 2009, 115.
[57] This section repeats and reworks some of the ideas that I present in De Jonge 2018.

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> matter, but have reaped no benefit from their efforts because they have given them a haphazard and unmusical arrangement (ἁρμονίαν); whereas others have taken humble words which might easily be despised (εὐκαταφρόνητα καὶ ταπεινὰ ὀνόματα), and by arranging them in a pleasing and striking manner (συνθέντες δ' αὐτὰ ἡδέως καὶ περιττῶς), have succeeded in investing their discourse with great beauty (πολλὴν τὴν ἀφροδίτην). (*Comp.* 3.2)

Dionysius illustrates his point by citing two beautiful compositions that are (in his view) put together from relatively simple words: the opening lines of *Odyssey* 16 (*Comp.* 3.8) and the well-known story of Gyges and Candaules from Herodotus 1.8–10 (*Comp.* 3.15). In the first passage, Odysseus, disguised as beggar, and Eumaeus are preparing their breakfast in the swineherd's hut, when suddenly Telemachus appears. According to Dionysius, these lines have an enchanting effect on the audience, despite their ordinary vocabulary: more attractive poetry does not exist. In his typical didactic, interactive manner, Dionysius asks his reader to identify the factor that makes the Homeric passage so enchantingly beautiful:[58]

> Wherein lies the persuasiveness (πειθώ) of these lines, and what causes them to be what they are? Is it the selection of words (ἐκλογὴν τῶν ὀνομάτων) or the composition (σύνθεσιν)? No one will say, 'selection', I am sure. For the whole passage is woven together from the most commonplace, humble words (τῶν εὐτελεστάτων καὶ ταπεινοτάτων ὀνομάτων), such as might have come readily to the tongue of a farmer, seaman or artisan, or anyone else who takes no trouble to speak well. If the metre is broken up (λυθέντος τοῦ μέτρου), these same lines will appear banal and without quality. They contain no excellent metaphors or examples of *hypallage* or *catachresis* or any other type of figurative language, nor are there many glosses (γλῶτται) or exotic (ξένα) or newly coined words (πεποιημένα ὀνόματα).[59] What alternative, therefore, is there left but to attribute the beauty of the style (τοῦ κάλλους τῆς ἑρμηνείας) to the composition (σύνθεσιν)? (*Comp.* 3.9–12)

Dionysius here suggests that his favorite tool of *metathesis* (the rearrangement of words) would prove that composition – and not vocabulary – is responsible for the charming quality of the Homeric passage: if one broke up the metre (and thereby destroyed the σύνθεσις), the remaining words would be banal (φαῦλα) and unworthy

[58] On the interactive style in Dionysius, see Wiater 2011a, 279–97.
[59] *Hypallage* is metonymy (substitution of one name for another): see Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.23; on the related figure of *catachresis*, see *Inst.* 8.6.35–6.

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of admiration (ἄζηλα).[60] The ordinary vocabulary in the Homeric passage corresponds to the down-to-earth, everyday-like character of the scene: the words used in this passage are those words that the swineherd Eumaeus would perhaps use himself, just like any 'farmer, seaman or artisan'. As Hunter has argued, the critical terminology of social class distinctions in this passage could be traced back to the characterization of Euripides (and his preference for 'everyday things') in Aristophanes' *Frogs*.[61] In *On Demosthenes* Dionysius presents a similar distinction between the language of the elite and that of 'men who work on the land and the sea, and common tradesmen': there, Dionysius recommends the use of a middle style, a mixture of grandeur and simplicity, by which the orator could convince both upper and lower classes in his audience.[62] In the Eumaeus passage, 'humble words' seem to be words that denote humble things: the passage contains words like 'hut' (κλισίη), 'breakfast' (ἄριστον) and 'vessels' (ἄγγεα).

Dionysius is remarkably fond of Homer's *Odyssey* in *On Composition*: there is no other text from which he cites more passages in this treatise. The final chapter of *On Composition*, for example, cites the opening passage of *Odyssey* 14, in which Odysseus, disguised as a beggar by Athena after his arrival at Ithaca, finds Eumaeus sitting in front of his humble house.[63] Dionysius' interest in Homeric passages on swineherds and beggars must be explained precisely by the contrast that he observes between the lowliness of theme and the ordinary words, on the one hand, and the beauty of composition, on the other.[64] The following table shows some of the passages from the *Odyssey* that Dionysius cites in which beggars and swineherds play a significant role:

[60] On *metathesis*, see Greenberg 1958; De Jonge 2005; 2008, 367–90. Fuhrer 2003, 353–60 compares the method of *metathesis* in Philodemus and Horace. For a different dimension of *metathesis*, see Wiater in this volume, pp. 76–82.

[61] Hunter 2009, 19. [62] *Dem.* 15.2. See Yunis in this volume p. 91 n.19.

[63] It is significant that this passage is cited in a discussion of how poetry can be made to resemble prose: this is an example of beautiful poetry that borders on the style of prose, not only because of the variation that the poet adopts in the length and form of the clauses, as Dionysius emphasizes in his discussion, but also (we may add) because of the low character of the theme and the simple language. On Eumaeus in *Comp.*, see De Jonge 2018.

[64] The remarkable prominence of Eumaeus in Dionysius' treatise might be related to Phld. *On Poems* 1 fr. 159 Janko where Janko 2000, 366–7 has reconstructed the word συφορβός (swineherd), 'an unexpectedly low character for the high genre of epic'. Like Dionysius, some of the Hellenistic critics of poetry seem to have been interested in the beauty of Homeric poetry that deals with low subject matter in simple diction.

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Comp. 3.8	*Od.* 16.1–16	Odysseus and Eumaeus in the swineherd's hut
Comp. 4.12	*Od.* 16.273	Eumaeus leads Odysseus as beggar
Comp. 5.8	*Od.* 14.425	Eumaeus kills a boar
Comp. 16.9	*Od.* 6.137	Odysseus looks ugly, 'befouled with brine'
Comp. 26.11	*Od.* 14.1–7	Odysseus approaches the hut of Eumaeus

The disguised Odysseus, whose visit to Eumaeus provides Dionysius with several examples of excellent composition, has in fact a programmatic function in Dionysius' composition theory: Dionysius points out that the technique of σύνθεσις could be compared to the Homeric goddess Athena, who is capable of completely changing the appearance of Odysseus:

> For she (Athena) used to make the same Odysseus appear in different forms at different times, – at one time small, wrinkled and ugly, 'resembling a pitiful aged beggar' (*Od.* 16.273; 17.202, 337), and at another time, by another touch of the same wand, 'she rendered him taller to see, and broader; and she made his wavy hair to fall over his shoulders like the hyacinth flower' (*Od.* 6.230–1; 23.157–8). So also compositions take the same words (ὀνόματα), and make the ideas (νοήματα) that they convey appear misshapen, beggarly and mean, and at another time sublime, rich and beautiful. And this is after all what makes the difference between one poet and another poet, between one orator and another orator: the dexterity with which they arranged their words (τὸ συντιθέναι δεξιῶς τὰ ὀνόματα). (*Comp.* 4.12–13)

A crucial word in the final sentence is δεξιῶς: good poets and orators are recognized by the fact that they combine their words 'skillfully', 'dexterously'. The word δεξιός had been established as a critical term at least since Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1009), where Euripides states that skill (δεξιότης) is one of the two qualities for which a poet should be admired. Dionysius uses the word more than once to characterize skillful composition. Commenting on Herodotus' story of Gyges and Candaules (1.8–10), his second main example of enchanting composition, Dionysius remarks that its charming quality, like that of the passage cited from *Odyssey* 16, is due to skillful word arrangement: the scene itself is 'lowly' (ταπεινόν), 'dangerous' (ἐπικίνδυνον) and 'closer to ugliness than to beauty' (τοῦ αἰσχροῦ μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ καλοῦ).[65] The words are as lowly as the contents to which they refer: they are 'artless' (ἀνεπιτήδευτα) and 'not carefully

[65] On Gyges and Candaules (Hdt. 1.9–13) as an intertextual model in Dionysius' *Roman Antiquities*, see Schultze in this volume pp. 169–70.

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chosen' (ἀνέκλεκτα). The story, however, 'has been told with great dexterity' (εἴρηται σφόδρα δεξιῶς, *Comp.* 3.14–16), i.e., the words have been skillfully arranged.

The Artful Arrangement of Common Words: Horace

Let us now turn to Horace, whose fascination with artful composition is already clear from his *Satires. Satire* 1.4 is a complex poem, which is full of irony and ambiguous statements. My discussion must be brief and will focus on a passage that resonates with some of the ideas of Dionysius that we have just encountered.[66] Horace draws a contrast between the satiric verses that he and Lucilius write, on the one hand, and the epic poetry of Ennius, on the other: unlike Ennius, whose lines consist of elevated, bombastic language and epic, military themes, the satirist composes verses in simple words (*puris . . . verbis*). The difference between the genres will be seen, Horace says, if you 'break up' (i.e., rearrange) the lines (*si dissoluas*, 55; *si soluas*, 60) and take away the rhythms and metres of these poems. In the case of the satirist, no poetry will remain, whereas in the case of Ennius, the rearranged passage will still contain elevated words and heroic subject matter: here one would still find 'the limbs of a dismembered poet':

> Therefore, it is not enough to write out verse in simple words (*puris . . . uerbis*) that, if you rearrange them (*si dissoluas*), any real-life father could use in raging at his son, just as the father in the play. Now concerning the verses I now write, which Lucilius wrote at one time, if you should take away their fixed rhythms and metres (*eripias si / tempora certa modosque*), making the word earlier in line later and putting last things before first, you would not discover the limbs even of a dismembered poet (*disiecti membra poetae*) as (you would) if you broke down (*si soluas*) 'Once foul Discord had broken back the brazen posts and gates of war' (*postquam Discordia taetra / Belli ferratos postis portasque refregit*, Enn. *Ann.* 225–6 Sk.) (*Sat.* 1.4.53–62)[67]

As Freudenburg has observed, this passage is closely related to the argument of *On Composition* and the method of metathesis that Dionysius frequently applies.[68] In his discussion of the opening of *Odyssey* 16, as we

[66] The following interpretation owes much to Freudenburg 1993, 145–50; Armstrong and Oberhelman 1995; Gowers 2012, 166–9.

[67] Translation adapted from Freudenburg 1993, 146.

[68] Freudenburg 1993, 131–2. Fuhrer 2003, 362 n. 15 argues that the position of Horace is different from that of Dionysius: in her interpretation, the Latin poet does not diminish the role of ἐκλογή (diction), but admires Ennius' poetry with its elevated words. But this interpretation seems to miss the irony of the passage: the point is exactly that Horace '*disingenuously* alleges that there is more poetry in an epic line of Ennius than in his or Lucilius' satires' (Gowers 2012, 167; my italics).

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have seen, Dionysius points out that 'if the metre is broken up' (λυθέντος τοῦ μέτρου) the Homeric lines will appear banal (φαῦλα) and without quality. Whether the persona of the satirist in *Satire* 1.4 is to be identified with Horace himself or with one of his critics (as Freudenburg suggests), it is clear that he applies the same method of rearrangement: in both passages, low subject matter and simple diction are contrasted with artful composition, including metre and word order, and both critics refer to the procedure of metathesis to prove their point that composition means everything. The complex syntax and word order of lines 53–62 themselves underline the pervasive importance of composition, even if Horace's ironical words might be interpreted as suggesting the opposite (i.e., that Ennius does not need word order to be good poetry). The main difference between the line cited from Ennius and Horace's own lines is that the former has an almost prosaic, straightforward word order, whereas Horace's poetry with its convoluted word order appears to be itself the result of a metathesis, i.e., a highly complex rearrangement of a simple prose text. If one would break up (*si dissoluas*) Horace's lines again, no poetry would remain, as the artful word order has become its main quality and the characteristic of good poetry.[69]

Horace returns to the topic of word arrangement in the *Ars Poetica*. Here is the well-known passage on *callida iunctura* (skillful arrangement):[70]

> in uerbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis
> dixeris egregie notum si callida uerbum
> reddiderit iunctura nouum.

> As to words: if you are delicate and cautious in arranging them, you will give distinction to your style if an ingenious combination makes a familiar word new. (*Ars P.* 46–8)

The crucial words *serendis* and *iunctura* are echoed in a later passage of the *Ars Poetica*, which is part of the discussion of satyr-play and its style:[71]

> ex noto fictum carmen sequar, ut sibi quiuis
> speret idem, sudet multum frustraque laboret
> ausus idem; tantum series iuncturaque pollet,
> tantum de medio sumptis accedit honoris.

[69] This line of interpretation follows Armstrong and Oberhelman 1995, 243–4.

[70] Following Rudd 1989, 156, I retain the order of the lines in the manuscripts, because I take *serendis* (46), which anticipates *series* (242), as referring to the arrangement of words. Brink 1971, 134–5 defends Bentley's transposition 46–45.

[71] Cf. Rudd 1989 ad 240: 'By "poetry newly fashioned from familiar elements" H. means style, not content, as is clear from *series iuncturaque*'.

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> I shall make up my poem of known elements, so that anyone may hope to do the same, but he will sweat and labour to no purpose when he ventures; such is the force of arrangement and combination, such the splendour that commonplace words acquire. (*Ars P.* 240–3)

There has been some debate concerning the relationship between the notions of *iunctura* and σύνθεσις. For Immisch they are the same; Russell suggests a strong connection between the two; Brink, on the other hand, points out that σύνθεσις is largely concerned with euphony (i.e., rhythm and melody), whereas *iunctura* is primarily a syntactic and semantic phenomenon: a smart collocation can give a new meaning to a well-known word or phrase (e.g., *carpe diem*).[72] While agreeing with Brink that the focus of Dionysius' σύνθεσις is different from that of Horace's *iunctura*, I would like to draw attention to some striking correspondences in their discourse and their approach to word arrangement.

There are four aspects of Horace's discussion of *iunctura* that particularly correspond to elements in Dionysius' treatment of σύνθεσις. First, the poet is advised to select commonplace words: 'words taken from the common stock' (*de medio sumpta, Ars P.* 243) can be compared with 'contemptible and humble words' (εὐκαταφρόνητα καὶ ταπεινὰ ὀνόματα, *Comp.* 3.3). Horace formulates this rule in his discussion of satyr-play (*Ars P.* 220–50), but we should not suppose that it pertains to that genre exclusively. As scholars have observed, the style praised in this section seems to be the style that Horace adopts in his own poetry:[73] satyr-play is presented as the mean between tragedy and comedy, between the grand and the simple style. Commonplace words (*de medio sumpta*) are similar to the 'plain words' that distinguish Horace's poetry from that of Ennius (*pura uerba, Sat.* 1.4.53, above). Elevated or bombastic vocabulary is thus rejected by both Horace and Dionysius, but where the Roman seems to prefer words of the middle style (*de medio sumpta*), Dionysius, as we have seen, supposes that beautiful composition may arise even from the low register, that is, from words that are 'contemptible and humble'. The difference should not be exaggerated: it may be explained by the purposes of Dionysius' argument in the opening chapters of *On Composition*: word arrangement is *so* effective, he argues, that a beautiful passage may emerge *even* from the humble words of a farmer or a seaman. In other passages, Dionysius advocates the use of 'common

[72] Immisch 1932 *ad loc.*; Russell 1973, 117; Brink 1971, 139. Cf. Rudd 1989, 157. Pers. 5.14 (*iunctura callidus acri*) famously echoes Horace's expression.

[73] Armstrong 1993, 188.

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words', which he calls κύρια ὀνόματα (*Comp.* 4.21). This expression, which has an Aristotelian background, is also found in the *Ars Poetica*: in line 234 Horace refers to *dominantia nomina*, which is a pure calque of κύρια ὀνόματα.[74] 'Dominating names' are familiar words (as opposed to metaphors, glosses, etc.) and roughly correspond to *de medio sumpta*, 'ordinary language'.[75]

Secondly, both authors draw attention to the important idea of skill or cleverness: Dionysius, as we have seen, believes that good orators and poets are recognized by 'the combining of words in a skilful, dexterous way': τὸ συντιθέναι δεξιῶς τὰ ὀνόματα (*Comp.* 4.13). I suggest that this formulation expresses an idea similar to Horace's *callida iunctura* (*Ars P.* 47–8). Just like δεξιός, the word *callidus* has the connotation of 'practical skill': it is the dexterity that one acquires by experience and practice.[76]

Thirdly, both Horace and Dionysius present clever word arrangement in terms of a metamorphosis, although they do so in different ways: for Horace *notum* becomes *nouum* (*Ars P.* 47–8: the 'well-known' becomes 'new'; an idea that is expressed by the ingenious placing of the words in the two lines), while for Dionysius misshapen, humble and beggarly words (ἄμορφα καὶ ταπεινὰ καὶ πτωχά) are – just like Odysseus – transformed into sublime, rich and beautiful ones (ὑψηλὰ καὶ πλούσια καὶ καλά, *Comp.* 4.12).

Finally, there is the theme of distinction. We have seen that for Dionysius dexterous composition is the quality by which 'one poet differs (διαλλάττει) from the other, one orator from the other' (*Comp.* 4.13). Horace makes a similar claim: he proudly announces that *he* will mould poetry from the familiar, so that *other* poets will toil in vain when attempting the same: 'such is the force of arrangement and combination, such the splendour that commonplace words acquire' (240–3).[77]

Dionysius, Horace and the Tradition of Composition Theory

Although the focus of Horace and Dionysius, as we have seen, is slightly different (semantic collocation versus euphonious harmony), they attach the same importance to effective word arrangement (*series, iunctura,*

[74] Arist. *Poet.* 21.1457b1. See Brink 1971, 285–6. [75] See Cic. *De orat.* 3.177; *Or.* 163.

[76] Cf. De Jonge 2012a, 722–4.

[77] Cf. Oliensis 1998, 222: 'In the fashioning of a poem as of a gentleman, it is easy enough to make a silk purse out of silk, harder to achieve the same result with a sow's ear. What distinguishes the poet is the art by which he transforms the familiar and commonplace (*notum, medium*) into something novel and distinguished'.

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σύνθεσις, ἁρμονία). The ideal of a skillful arrangement of ordinary words seems to have had a special appeal to writers of the Augustan Age, but it was by no means a new concept.[78] In a brief statement on composition in his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle already recommends selecting words from ordinary language:

> κλέπτεται δ' εὖ, ἐάν τις ἐκ τῆς εἰωθυίας διαλέκτου ἐκλέγων συντιθῇ· ὅπερ Εὐριπίδης ποιεῖ καὶ ὑπέδειξε πρῶτος.
>
> Art is cleverly concealed, when one selects his words from ordinary language and puts them together. That is what Euripides does; he was the first to point the way. (Arist. *Rh.* 3.2.1404b24-5)

While the terminology of ἐκλέγειν (ἐκλογή) and συντιθέναι (σύνθεσις) anticipates the parameters of Dionysius' stylistic theory, the words κλέπτεται δ' εὖ seem to hint precisely at the idea of cleverness that Horace expresses with the adjective *callidus* and Dionysius with the adverb δεξιῶς.[79]

The seeds of *synthesis* theory are thus already present in Aristotle. However, it seems that the high moment for composition in critical theory came in the first century BC, in late Republican and Augustan Rome. A good history of ancient composition theory, which remains to be written, should examine the points of contact between a number of Greek and Roman authors, including Philodemus, Cicero, the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Horace and Dionysius, who all belong to the first century BC.[80] Since Hellenistic poetic theory appears to be a major influence on both Horace and Dionysius, the emphasis on σύνθεσις in Philodemus' *On Poems* is especially relevant. One passage from that work idealizes the skillful arrangement of commonplace words in a formulation that suggests connections with the Dionysian and Horatian passages cited above. We cannot be sure about the exact context of this fragment, but Janko proposes that Philodemus is here citing the views of Pausimachus, one of the Hellenistic critics:[81]

> καί φη[σι τὸ "τιν]ὰς λέγειν ἐκ [καλῶν κ]αὶ ποιητικῶν ὀν[ομάτω]ν τὸ χρηστὸν ἢ [φαῦλον] πόημα, κατὰ [δ' ἄλλους], τὸ πολλάκις [εἰρημέν]ον,

[78] See Freudenburg 1993, 128–32 on the 'theoretical precedents' of Dionysius and Horace.

[79] Cf. Grube 1965, 95; Freudenburg 1993, 129–30. Like Aristotle, Longinus, *Subl.* 40.2 picks out Euripides as one of the models of clever composition. Cf. De Jonge 2012a, 718–19. Both Euripides (*Comp.* 11.19, 23.9, 25.22, 26.13) and Aristophanes (*Comp.* 26.14) figure prominently in Dionysius' treatise.

[80] Scaglione 1972 offers useful observations but remains unsatisfactory as a 'historical survey'.

[81] Janko 2000, 244–5. I cite Janko's translation.

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> φαῦλα γί[νεσθαι ἐ]ξ ἰδιωτικῶν [καὶ ἐξ ε]ὐτελῶν, συ[γ]κει[μένω]ν δὲ καλῶς, χ[ρ]ησ[τά."]
>
> Some, he says, claim that good or bad verse arises from beautiful and poetic words, but according to others, as has often been said, inferior (verses) arise from commonplace and ordinary (words), but when (such words) are beautifully arranged, good (verses arise). (Phld. *On Poems* 1 fr. 55)

This critic of poetry uses the same terms as Dionysius in his instructions on rhetorical prose (note καλός, φαῦλος, χρηστός, etc.). That the transition between poetic criticism and rhetorical composition theory in the first century BC was indeed a smooth one is confirmed when we compare Cicero and Horace. In the *Orator* Cicero claims that, in composing speeches, words should not be selected with particular attention to euphony, 'as the poets do' (*ut poetae*), but 'taken from ordinary language' (*sumpta de medio*).[82] Cicero seems to imply that in this respect prose differs from poetry. Just a few decades later, however, Horace applies precisely the same formulation *sumpta de medio* to the language of poetry (*Ars P.* 243, above).

The tradition of composition theory does not end, of course, with Dionysius and Horace. It is tantalizing that Longinus, the author of *On the Sublime*, claims to have composed a separate work Περὶ συνθέσεως in two books.[83] Some idea of what it contained can be deduced from his discussion of σύνθεσις in *On the Sublime* (39–42), which shows many points of contact with Dionysius' *On Composition*. Like Dionysius, Longinus believes that both poets and prose writers can achieve distinction by cleverly combining ordinary words:

> ἀλλὰ μὴν ὅτι γε πολλοὶ καὶ συγγραφέων καὶ ποιητῶν οὐκ ὄντες ὑψηλοὶ φύσει, μήποτε δὲ καὶ ἀμεγέθεις, ὅμως κοινοῖς καὶ δημώδεσι τοῖς ὀνόμασι καὶ οὐδὲν ἐπαγομένοις περιττὸν ὡς τὰ πολλὰ συγχρώμενοι, διὰ μόνου τοῦ συνθεῖναι καὶ ἁρμόσαι ταῦτα † δ' ὅμως † ὄγκον καὶ διάστημα καὶ τὸ μὴ ταπεινοὶ δοκεῖν εἶναι περιεβάλοντο, . . .
>
> Many writers both in prose and poetry, who are not by nature sublime, perhaps even the very opposite, while using for the most part current vulgar words, which suggest nothing out of the ordinary, yet by the mere arrangement and fitting together of these . . . have achieved dignity and distinction and a reputation for grandeur, . . . (Longinus, *Subl.* 40.2)[84]

[82] *Orat.* 163: Cicero here deals with 'sound' (*sonus*) and 'rhythm' (*numerus*): compare Dionysius' μέλος and ῥυθμός (*Comp.* 11.15–26).
[83] Longinus, *Subl.* 39.1.
[84] Translation adapted from Fyfe and Russell in Halliwell, Fyfe and Russell, and Innes 1995.

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Even if we do not adopt either δολίως (deceitfully) or δεξιῶς (dexterously) as an emendation for the corrupt † δ' ὅμως †, it is clear that Longinus' discussion seamlessly fits into the pattern that we have established between Dionysius and Horace:[85] for Longinus, common words and artful composition lead not only to distinction (διάστημα), but even to the sublime.

An Augustan Taste: Dionysius, Augustus and Virgil

Our discussion has revealed a remarkable agreement between the approaches to stylistic composition in the works of Dionysius and Horace. I have argued that their views must be understood as participating in the literary discourse that connects various Greek and Roman poets and critics in Rome: we have identified traces of similar ideas in the fragments and works of Pausimachus, Philodemus, Cicero and Longinus. It is not possible to reconstruct the precise connections among all these individual authors; as I have pointed out above, such connections may have involved both oral exchange and written communication.

In the case of Dionysius, the various members of his literary circle should of course be taken into account. He may well have made connections with Roman intellectuals via the father of his student Metilius Rufus, to whose birthday we owe the existence of *On Composition*. The Metilii are interestingly included in the *Roman Antiquities* (3.29.7), suggesting that there may have been a relationship of patronage between this family and the Greek critic. But Dionysius also exchanged ideas with the prominent lawyer and historian Quintus Aelius Tubero, the addressee of his *On Thucydides*; Cicero had been a friend of his father Lucius Aelius Tubero.[86] Dionysius also had ample opportunities for exchange with other Greek rhetoricians: let us here just be reminded of Dionysius' friend Caecilius of Caleacte (*Pomp.* 3.20), who is the target of Longinus' *On the Sublime*. Finally, who knows what mediating role Dionysius' other addressees may have played in Augustan Rome: learned men like Ammaeus, Demetrius and Gnaeus Pompeius Geminus.[87]

The ideal of a skillful arrangement of ordinary words seems to have a special relevance to the stylistic writing of the Augustan Age: many of the theorists of composition mentioned above belong to this period. That there are links between Philodemus and the Augustan poets is now

[85] Immisch 1925, 26–7 has proposed δολίως: see also Immisch 1932, 80–1. De Jonge 2012a proposes δεξιῶς on the basis of *Comp.* 4.13 (above). For further connections between Dionysius and Longinus, see De Jonge 2012b.
[86] See Cic. *Lig.* 5.12. [87] See De Jonge 2008, 27–8.

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commonly accepted;[88] Horace and Dionysius were fully engaged in the cultural life of Augustan Rome; Longinus' date remains uncertain, but claims for an Augustan context have indeed been made.[89] Could we in fact speak of an Augustan stylistic taste, that is, a taste shared by various Greek and Roman writers, critics, rhetoricians and poets? To conclude this chapter, I would like to indicate two ways in which the stylistic doctrine of both Dionysius and Horace ties in with the rhetorical and literary culture of Augustan Rome: first, the preferences of Augustus himself, and second, the poetic style of Virgil.

Suetonius tells us that Augustus' style of speaking was 'elegant and chaste' (*elegans et temperatum*).[90] The *princeps*, being a student of the Greek rhetorician Apollodorus of Pergamon, detested 'the foulness of far-fetched words' (*reconditorum uerborum fetor*). His own style was extremely clear and moderate, as Suetonius tells us, holding the middle between two faulty extremes: on the one hand, Augustus avoided the archaisms of Tiberius, whom he criticized for his 'obsolete and pedantic expressions' (*exoletas . . . et reconditas uoces*); on the other hand, he objected to the decadent style of Maecenas with its 'unguent-dripping curls' (*myrobrechis cincinnos*). Augustus also accused Mark Antony for his stylistic inconsistency, as he was switching between archaic and Asianic registers. In other words, Octavian objected to those orators and politicians who used unusual, difficult and obscure words (either old-fashioned or innovative), whereas he himself adopted a clear style consisting of common words. It is in this stylistic preference that Augustus' Atticism coincides with Dionysius' Atticism. When Dionysius expresses his gratitude to Rome by observing that its leaders are εὐπαίδευτοι (well educated) and γενναῖοι τὰς κρίσεις (excellent in their judgment, *Orat. Vett.* 3.1), it is therefore tempting to conclude that Dionysius is (also) thinking of the eloquence of Augustus himself.[91] The comeback of the Attic muse in the world of Rome was made possible first of all by the administrative power of Rome, Dionysius claims; but he must also have appreciated the fact that the Roman emperor himself was trained in the Greek tradition, and that he shared his preference for clear and common vocabulary.

Let us finally turn from prose once more to poetry, this time not to Horace but to the greatest poet of the Augustan Age. In his own time, the secret of Virgil's poetic style was already recognized and analyzed in terms

[88] See esp. Armstrong, Fish, Johnston and Skinner 2004.
[89] Mazzucchi 2010 and De Jonge 2012b offer arguments for a date in the Augustan period.
[90] Suet. *Aug.* 86. My translations of Suetonius are based on Rolfe 1998.
[91] *Orat. Vett.* 3.1–3 is cited by Wiater in this volume, pp. 72–3. Cf. Yunis in this volume, pp. 85–88.

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that echo the ideals of Dionysius and Horace. In a much debated testimony, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa accused Virgil of being the 'inventor of a new kind of stylistic affectation (*cacozelia*), neither extravagant nor affectedly simple, but based on common words (*ex communibus uerbis*) and for that reason not at once perceived'.[92] As Görler has pointed out, Agrippa must here be alluding to Virgil's remarkable arrangement of unpretentious words.[93] Virgil's *uerba communia* may be compared to Horace's *de medio sumpta*. Gian Biagio Conte explains Virgil's style as a sublime style, which makes use of artful syntax and the unexpected transposition of linguistic elements.[94] The secret of Virgil's poetry, not unlike that of Horace's *Odes*, is to be sought in the surprising and powerful collocation and juxtaposition of words rather than in the vocabulary itself, which consists, as Conte remarks elsewhere, of 'terms not conspicuously poetic, "neutral" words, so to speak, employed in prose and the language of everyday usage'.[95]

It would be interesting to explore further points of contact between Dionysius and the Roman poets of his time, and I conclude with a brief suggestion. We have seen that Dionysius shows a remarkable preference for examples from the *Odyssey*. In *On Composition* he cites various passages featuring the swineherd Eumaeus, depicting scenes from everyday life, such as the morning meal with pots and vessels in the swineherd's hut (*Odyssey* 16), which Dionysius cites in order to demonstrate the enchanting effect of σύνθεσις. Various parallels for this pastoral scene could be adduced from Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, but the closest parallel is perhaps book 8 of the *Aeneid*, where Evander entertains Aeneas in his humble house on the Palatine.[96] It has been pointed out that Evander's house on the Palatine anticipates Augustus' modest dwelling on the same hill.[97] Suetonius considers the (relatively) small proportions of Augustus' residence as typical for his temperate lifestyle, and he admires the 'simplicity of his furniture and household goods'.[98] If it is true that Virgil's imitation of the Homeric scene also alludes to Augustus, this might add a further dimension to Dionysius' emphasis on Eumaeus' dwelling (in various parts of his treatise

[92] Donat. *Vit. Verg.* 44. Translation adapted from Camps 1969, 120.
[93] Görler 1979, 179–80. On the meaning of the difficult passage, see also Jocelyn 1979 (who defends the manuscript reading Vipranius); Horsfall 1995, 225–6.
[94] Conte 2007, 63–7 examines the connections between Virgil's style and the composition theory of Dionysius and Longinus.
[95] Conte 1994, 282. On Virgil's vocabulary, word order and style, see O'Hara 1997; Horsfall 1995, 217–48; Dainotti 2015 with further bibliography.
[96] On the connections between Eumaeus and Evander, see Knauer 1964, 252–4; Gransden 1976, 25–6.
[97] E.g., Gransden 1976, 30. [98] Suet. *Aug.* 72–3.

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On Composition). It is the simplicity of a modest house, then, in which Greek criticism, Latin poetry, and the self-fashioning of Augustus come together.[99] Such suggestive parallels should stimulate us to explore further the fascinating connections between Greek literary theory and Latin literature in Augustan Rome.

[99] I further explore this idea in De Jonge 2018.

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