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*Greek Reading Lists from Dionysius to Dio
Rhetorical Imitation in the Augustan Age and the Second
Sophistic*

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Introduction

The books that we read shape who we are. Do we prefer Shakespeare or Beckett? Françoise Sagan or Virginia Woolf? Eichendorff or Hesse? *Alice in Wonderland* or *Winnie-the-Pooh*? Young readers develop their own preferences, while being guided by the recommendations of their parents and teachers. This was not different in ancient times. Hellenistic and Roman rhetoricians made use of extensive reading lists that ranked the best authors of each genre. The selected authors of the past were not just to be read and studied, but also to be imitated in writing and speaking: *mimesis* (μίμησις) thus became a defining aspect of the literature of the Hellenistic and Roman world. It was the eclectic imitation and emulation of selected writers from the rich tradition that helped Greek and Roman speakers and authors to construct their own literary identity.¹ The reservoir of models to be imitated was abundant: a ‘classic’ poet like Homer was always admired, but the appreciation of authors like Xenophon, Theopompus or Isaeus fluctuated considerably through the centuries: different periods had different preferences, and individual teachers and students could also develop their own literary tastes. Reading lists were indispensable for students who wished to acquire a basic overview of literary styles, from which they could make their own choices, depending on their age, their abilities and the purpose of imitation. Depending on the stylistic qualities needed – clear language, realistic characterisation, rhythmical composition and so on – one could choose one’s preferred models of inspiration: Sophocles or Euripides, Herodotus or Xenophon, Sappho or Pindar, Demosthenes or Aeschines, Aristophanes or Menander. This chapter will compare two ancient reading lists of Greek literature, one of them produced in the Augustan Age, the other one in

¹ On imitation in Greek imperial literature, see Whitmarsh 2001a: esp. 41–89. For the wide-ranging ancient concept of μίμησις, see Halliwell 2002.

the Flavian Age. The authors of the two reading lists are Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Dio of Prusa (also known as Dio Chrysostom).

Dionysius and Dio have many things in common. Both were learned intellectuals from Asia Minor; both men published a substantial number of writings in Greek; both authors went to Rome at important moments in their careers; and both were in touch with influential Romans of their time. Both men could be called rhetoricians; one was primarily a man of theory, the other one a man of practice. The two authors are separated by approximately a century. Dionysius (born before 55 BCE) came to Rome in 30 BCE, where he wrote a history of early Rome and several rhetorical letters, essays and treatises; among his addressees are both Greek intellectuals and Roman aristocrats.² Dio of Prusa (c. 45–115 CE) travelled through the Roman world of Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva and Trajan.³ Although Dionysius and Dio have a lot in common, their works are not usually discussed in close connection. Dionysius is considered to be the main representative of Greek classicism of the Augustan world, whereas Dio is regarded as a leading figure of the Second Sophistic. The authors of both periods were deeply engaged with the culture of classical Greece: they strongly believed that the intensive reading and creative imitation of classical literature should form the basis of eloquence and writing.⁴ But does classicism mean the same thing for Dionysius and for Dio? Are these two authors interested in the same classical orators, historians and poets? And what is the purpose of their literary recommendations? In exploring the ‘dialogue’ between Dionysius and Dio, this chapter contributes to the two main aims of this volume: to examine the connections between different genres (in this case rhetorical treatises and letters), and to explore the processes of change and continuity between late Hellenistic and imperial texts.⁵

Dionysius’ reading list was part of his work *On Imitation* (Περὶ μιμήσεως), of which only fragments and an epitome (perhaps from the third century CE) have been preserved.⁶ The second book of the work

² On Dionysius’ life and works, see Hidber 1996: 1–8; on his addressees, patrons and colleagues in Rome, de Jonge 2008: 25–34; on Dionysius and Augustan Rome, see Hunter and de Jonge 2019a.

³ On Dio’s life and works, see von Arnim 1898, Russell 1992: 1–8, and Swain 2000: 1–10. On Dio as a literary critic, see Valgimigli 1912 and Russell 1989: 299–302.

⁴ On classicism in Dionysius, see Wiater 2011. On the politics of imitation in Dio, see Whitmarsh 2001a: 133–46.

⁵ See König and Wiater in the introduction to this volume. I am here adopting their flexible use of the term ‘dialogue’, and drawing on their reflections on the range of ways in which we use terms like ‘Hellenistic’ and ‘imperial’: Dionysius and Dio are both writers of ‘imperial literature’, and both could be categorised as ‘late Hellenistic’; however, Dionysius is usually considered an ‘Augustan’ author (e.g., Hunter and de Jonge 2019a), whereas Dio is framed as a Flavian author (e.g., Sidebottom 1996) or an author of the Second Sophistic (e.g., Swain 2000).

⁶ For the fragments and the epitome I will follow the edition by Aujac 1992. Battisti 1997 provides an edition with commentary. On the date of the epitome, see Usener 1889: 7. Translations of Dionysius in this chapter are based on Usher 1974 and 1985.

contained a survey of the most important poets, historians, philosophers and orators of classical Greece: our knowledge of this part of the text largely depends on the epitome, but Dionysius' discussion of the historians (Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Philistus, Theopompus) has also been preserved in his *Letter to Pompeius*, where he cites extensively from *On Imitation*.⁷ Dio presents his reading list in *Oration* 18, which is the only text within the corpus Dioneum that takes the form of a letter. Its traditional title is *On Training for Public Speaking* (Περὶ λόγου ἀσκήσεως).⁸ There were of course more ancient reading lists, some of which have also survived. The survey of Greek literature in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* book 10 was roughly contemporary with Dio's letter and was probably inspired by Dionysius' *On Imitation*, unless the similarities between Dionysius and Quintilian must be explained by the use of a common source.⁹ In the second century CE Hermogenes concluded his *On Types of Style* with another reading list.¹⁰ Some of these lists may have been based on the recommendations of Alexandrian scholars of the early Hellenistic period. Quintilian indeed refers to 'the grammarians' list' (*ordinem a grammaticis datum*, *Inst.* 10.1.54), and he points out that Aristarchus and Aristophanes of Byzantium did not list their own contemporaries.¹¹

Scholars who have examined the ancient lists of Greek literature have argued that they are all very similar. More particularly, commentators have

⁷ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3.2–6.11 cites from *De imit.* Book 2 (fr. 7 Aujac = fr. 5 Battisti): see Weaire 2002.

⁸ Edition by von Arnim 1896. Translations of Dio 18 in this chapter are based on Cohoon 1939.

⁹ On Quintilian's reading list in book 10, see Tavernini 1953, Steinmetz 1964, Citroni 2006a, Citroni 2006b and Schippers 2019. Usener 1889: 110–11 asserts that Dionysius and Quintilian used the same source. Russell 2001: 246 states that Quintilian's reading list 'appears to be heavily dependent' on Dionysius. Battisti 1997: 35 leaves the question open. Below I will note some important differences between Quintilian and Dionysius: in some cases Quintilian agrees with Dio, while contradicting Dionysius.

¹⁰ Hermog. *Id.* 2.10–12 (Patillon 2012) (= 380–413 Rabe). See Rutherford 1998: 37–9; Wooten 1987 provides a translation.

¹¹ The reading lists in rhetorical treatises and letters (Dionysius, Dio, Quintilian, Hermogenes) were far more restrictive than the library catalogues of Hellenistic gymnasium libraries. A fragmentary inscription tells us that the gymnasium library of Rhodes (second century BCE) contained works of (among others) Demetrius of Phalerum, Hegesias, Theopompus, Dionysius, Diodotus, Damocles and Eratosthenes: see Segre 1935 and Rosamilia 2014: 355–60. Of these writers, the historian Theopompus is also included in the reading lists of Dionysius, Dio and Quintilian (see below). Demetrius of Phalerum is included in Quintilian's list of preferred orators, but ignored by Dionysius and Dio, at least in their reading lists (see de Jonge 2021). Hegesias, whose works were present in the gymnasium library of Rhodes, was rejected by Dionysius and other classicising rhetoricians as the worst writer ever, the epitome of the 'Asianist' style: see Ooms 2019 and Kim in this volume. The gymnasium library of Tauromenium (second century BCE) had names of authors painted on the wall (*SEG* 26.1123), including those of the historians Callisthenes of Olynthus, an unknown writer from Elis, Quintus Fabius Pictor, and Philistus of Syracuse, and the philosopher Anaximander of Miletus: see Battistoni 2006. Of these writers, Philistus is the only one who appears in the reading lists of Dionysius and Quintilian. The evidence from Rhodes and Tauromenium thus suggests that gymnasium libraries included much more material than the selective reading lists that were used in rhetorical education. Dionysius and Dio made a very limited selection from the wide range of authors and books that were available in some Hellenistic libraries.

repeatedly claimed that there is a general correspondence between Dio's selection of Greek authors and the reading lists in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *On Imitation* and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*. Lemarchand states that 'there is almost nothing in oration 18 that cannot be found in Dionysius or Quintilian: these are the current prescriptions, the traditional methods that all the handbooks of rhetoric contained'.¹² Cohoon points out that '[t]he fact that there are no great divergences in these lists gives the impression that there was general agreement in the ancient schools as to which were the best authors for students'.¹³ More recently, Rutherford has again emphasised the parallels between the reading lists of Dionysius, Dio and Quintilian: he concludes that all these lists distinguish the same genres (namely poetry, history, oratory and philosophy) and that in all versions poetry comes first, followed by the prose categories.¹⁴ Alain Billault has offered a more nuanced interpretation. Although he asserts that there are no 'substantial' differences between the reading lists in Dio, Dionysius and Quintilian, he rightly draws attention to the conciseness of Dio's list and to his emphasis on 'usefulness', which Billault explains by reference to the addressee of the letter (whose identity I will discuss below).¹⁵

In this chapter I will argue that Dio's reading list is in fact fundamentally different from that of Dionysius. Their surveys will be shown to share only a few superficial characteristics, like the distinction of poetry and three prose genres. But on closer inspection Dio's reading list radically turns away from that of Dionysius, not only in form (as rightly seen by Billault) but also in substance, that is, in the choice of models to be imitated. Among the authors that Dionysius prefers, Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Herodotus and Demosthenes stand out; Dio on the other hand recommends his addressee to study Menander, Euripides, Xenophon and Aeschines. A systematic comparison between the reading lists in Dionysius and Dio will reveal the many differences between their preferences in poetry, historiography, philosophy and oratory. I will offer three explanations for these differences. First, Dionysius and Dio have different

¹² Lemarchand 1926: 10: 'Comme on le voit, il n'y a à peu rien dans la lettre XVIII qui ne se retrouve chez Denys d'Halicarnasse et Quintilien. Ce sont les recettes courantes, les procédés traditionnels que contenaient tous les manuels d'art oratoire.'

¹³ Cohoon 1939: 209.

¹⁴ Rutherford 1998: 43: 'To summarize, the pre-Hermogean lists share the following points in common: (1) Poetry and prose are distinguished, and prose is divided into the three main genres of history, rhetoric and philosophy. (2) Within this arrangement poetry indisputably comes first and the prose categories come later in variable order.'

¹⁵ Billault 2004: 505. Again, Bost-Pouderon 2008: 45 points out that Dio uses the same categories ('les mêmes catégories') that we find in Dionysius and Quintilian. Mérot 2017 offers a more subtle interpretation of Dio's 'canon épistolaire', inspired by previous versions of the present chapter.

addressees and purposes: their intended audiences need different kinds of advice. Second, their choices to a large extent reflect the preferences of the Augustan Age and the Flavian Age respectively. Although Quintilian follows the order of Dionysius' list rather closely, it is striking that he agrees in essential points with his contemporary Dio. Quintilian's reading list thus confirms that the differences between Dionysius and Dio are not just related to their rhetorical purposes and audiences but also to the evolution of education (παιδεία), perhaps even the dynamics of a changing school curriculum. Combining the evidence from Dionysius, Dio and Quintilian thus allows us to draw a few conclusions about the development of literary preferences (at least in educational contexts) between the late Hellenistic period and the Second Sophistic. Third, Dionysius and Dio adopt a different tone, which is related to the genres of their works: a rhetorical treatise versus a literary letter: whereas Dionysius presents himself as a stern professor with a serious message, Dio adopts a more modest and more relaxed attitude; we will see that he consciously reverses some of the conventional points of the handbooks on imitation, producing what in some cases appears to be a light-hearted and humoristic pastiche of traditional rhetorical teaching.

Dionysius' *On Imitation*

Dionysius dedicated his treatise *On Imitation* to the unknown Greek Demetrius, but his intended audience consisted of all those 'who intend to become good writers and speakers' (τοῖς προαιρουμένοις γράφειν τε καὶ λέγειν εὔ, *On Thucydides* 1.1.). In the *Letter to Pompeius* (3.1) Dionysius summarises the contents of 'the essays that I addressed to Demetrius on the subject of imitation' (τοῖς εἰς Δημήτριον ὑπομνηματισμοῖς περὶ μιμήσεως):

τούτων ὁ μὲν πρῶτος αὐτὴν περιείληφε τὴν περὶ τῆς μιμήσεως ζήτησιν, ὁ δὲ δεύτερος περὶ τοῦ τίνας ἄνδρας μιμεῖσθαι δεῖ ποιητάς τε καὶ φιλοσόφους, ἱστοριογράφους <τε> καὶ ῥήτορας, ὁ δὲ τρίτος περὶ τοῦ πῶς δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι μέχρι τοῦδε ἀτελής.

The first of these contains an enquiry into the nature of imitation itself. The second discusses the question of which particular poets and philosophers, historians and orators, should be imitated. The third, in which the question of how imitation should be done, is as yet incomplete.

The epitomised version of the second book starts with two stories (*On Imitation* 1.1–5). The protagonist of the first anecdote (1.2–3) is an ugly

farmer who wishes to have beautiful children. Having fashioned beautiful images (εἰκόνας εὐπρεπεῖς), he asks his wife to look at them regularly. He then sleeps with her and so ensures that his children obtain 'the beauty of the images' (τὸ κάλλος τῶν εἰκόνων). The painter Zeuxis of Croton plays the leading role in the second story (1.4). When he is planning to make a painting of the naked Helen, the citizens of Croton send their daughters to the painter, so that he can see them naked. The girls are not all beautiful (καλαί), but it was not plausible that they were altogether ugly (αἰσχροί). Zeuxis selects the most beautiful features of each of them and brings them together into a single bodily image.

The two stories illustrate various aspects of Dionysius' views on the imitation and emulation of classical models. The first story in particular suggests that the intensive contemplation of beautiful models can result in the birth of new masterpieces, even if the 'father' of the text is himself not that beautiful: Dionysius (or his student) may not be a Homer, a Sophocles or a Demosthenes, but he will nevertheless be able to produce excellent texts if he allows his composition to be inspired by the classical models. The second narration makes it clear that μίμησις must be understood as the eclectic imitation of the best qualities of many different models: a new composition may, for example, combine the best qualities of Lysias, Isocrates, Lycurgus, Aeschines and Hyperides. None of these orators was perfect, but each of them had his specific qualities; brought together in the right balance these qualities will produce an excellent composition. Two scholars have recently identified some important themes in these stories: Richard Hunter has analysed Dionysius' language of pregnancy and birth, which invites a Platonic reading of his views on literary mimesis.¹⁶ Nicolas Wiater has rightly drawn attention to the metaphors of body and visual perception that are prominent in both stories. As Wiater points out, the terms of seeing and looking indicate that reading classical texts is an activity of close observation, by which the student must 'absorb the beauty' of the models.¹⁷ This is a fortunate formulation, which I would like to take one step further. The theme of 'beauty' (κάλλος) plays a crucial role in the two anecdotes: the ugly farmer wishes to have beautiful children, and therefore he shows his wife beautiful images. Zeuxis hopes to reproduce Helen, who is universally known as the most beautiful woman, and so he brings together the most beautiful parts of the girls of Croton.

¹⁶ Hunter 2009b: 107–26.

¹⁷ Wiater 2011: 78–83.

I suggest that this focus on beauty can to a large extent help us to understand Dionysius' selection of authors in the reading list that followed the two stories in *On Imitation* book 2: many of the authors listed in this (epitomised) canon are indeed recommended for the aesthetic qualities of their style, like beauty of expression (καλλιλογία), grandeur (μεγαλοπρέπεια), sublimity (ὑψος) and charm (ἡδονή). One of the qualities of Herodotus and Thucydides is their beauty of language (καλλιλογία, epitome 3.2); grandeur (μεγαλοπρέπεια) is a quality of style that one can learn not only from these two historians, but also from Pindar and Stesichorus; Aeschylus is sublime (ὑψηλός, 2.10), Hesiod and Herodotus took care of charm (ἡδονή, 2.2, 3.3). It is true that the characteristics attributed to a few other writers are more down to earth: the eloquence of Lysias, for example, is a sufficient guide for 'the useful and necessary' (τὸ χρήσιμον καὶ ἀναγκαῖον): he is simple, plain and elegant, and his narratives are clear and detailed (5.2). But overall Dionysius' reading list puts a remarkable emphasis on the aesthetic qualities of high literature, partly represented by poets of lyrical poems in exotic dialects, the practical imitation of which will not have been easy for the average student in Augustan Rome. It is plausible that one could learn something from Lysias' clarity and Demosthenes' vigour; but to write a persuasive speech while integrating Alcaeus' lofty genius (τὸ μεγαλοφύες), Pindar's grandeur (μεγαλοπρέπεια) and Aeschylus' sublimity (ὑψος) must have required a lot of talent, guidance and hard work, the three elements that Dionysius regards as indispensable for students who aim at perfection in eloquence (*On Imitation* fr. 1): skilful nature (φύσις δεξιὰ), accurate instruction (μάθησις ἀκριβής) and toilsome exercise (ἄσκησις ἐπίπονος).¹⁸

So how practical were Dionysius' recommendations? In his work *On Thucydides* (1.1), he tells us that he presented the reading list in *On Imitation* 'in order that those who intend to become good writers and speakers should have beautiful and approved standards':

Ἐν τοῖς προεκδοθεῖσι περὶ τῆς μιμήσεως ὑπομνηματισμοῖς ἐπεληλυθὼς οὗς ὑπελάμβανον ἐπιφανεστάτους εἶναι ποιητάς τε καὶ συγγραφεῖς, ὧς Κόιντε Αἴλιε Τουβέρων, καὶ δεδηλωκῶς ἐν ὀλίγοις, τίνας ἕκαστος αὐτῶν εἰσφέρειται πραγματικὰς τε καὶ λεκτικὰς ἀρετάς, καὶ πῇ μάλιστα χεῖρων ἑαυτοῦ γίνεται κατὰ τὰς ἀποτυχίας, εἴ τε τῆς προαιρέσεως οὐχ ἅπαντα

¹⁸ The triad ἄσκησις (or μελέτη), φύσις and τέχνη is already mentioned in Pl. *Phdr.* 269d, Isoc. 13.14–15 and 15.187; Diogenes Laertius 5.18 attributes the same doctrine to Aristotle. See also Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 1.1.2 and *Brut.* 25; Quint. *Inst.* 3.5.1. Cf. Kraus 1996: 71.

κατὰ τὸν ἀκριβέστατον λογισμὸν ὁρώσης εἴ τε τῆς δυνάμεως οὐκ ἐν ᾧ πασι τοῖς ἔργοις κατορθούσης, ἵνα τοῖς προαιρουμένοις γράφειν τε καὶ λέγειν εὖ καλοὶ καὶ δεδοκιμασμένοι κανόνες ᾧσιν, ἐφ' ὧν ποιήσονται τὰς κατὰ μέρος γυμνασίας μὴ πάντα μιμούμενοι τὰ παρ' ἐκείνοις κείμενα τοῖς ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰς μὲν ἀρετὰς αὐτῶν λαμβάνοντες, τὰς δ' ἀποτυχίας φυλαττόμενοι.

In the treatise *On Imitation*, which I published earlier, Quintus Aelius Tubero, I discussed those poets and prose authors whom I considered to be outstanding. I indicated briefly the good qualities of content and style contributed by each, and where his failings caused him to fall furthest below his own standards, either because his purpose did not enable him to grasp the scope of his subject in the fullest detail, or because his literary powers did not measure up to it throughout the whole of his work. I did this in order that those who intend to become good writers and speakers should have beautiful and approved standards by which to carry out their individual exercises, not imitating all the qualities of these authors, but adopting their good qualities and guarding against their failings.

Dionysius is quite clear about the practical purpose of his reading list: students will profit from the classical models while doing their exercises (γυμνασίας). They will adopt various stylistic qualities from a number of models and avoid their mistakes. On a different level, however, Dionysius may be said to be less practically-minded: his comments on the classical authors concentrate on aesthetic qualities rather than on their practical usefulness for political or juridical practice. There are no references to the specific skills needed in the Roman courts or political institutions. Dionysius is more interested in the aesthetic qualities of pure beauty: in claiming that the literary models presented in *On Imitation* are 'beautiful and approved standards' (καλοὶ καὶ δεδοκιμασμένοι κανόνες) Dionysius makes it clear that his selection of classical authors is to a large extent based on the aesthetic appreciation of the literature of a distant past rather than on the practical considerations required by public speech performances in Augustan Rome.

Dio's *On Training for Public Speaking*

Dio Chrysostom's *Oration* 18 presents itself as a letter to an anonymous politician, who wishes to acquire training in public speaking. Dio adopts the role of the young instructor of a rich, busy and powerful statesman, who has for unclear reasons not received a systematic rhetorical education. The date of the work is uncertain; most scholars believe that it is a relatively early composition, written before Dio's exile, perhaps between

60 and 80 CE.¹⁹ The epistolary form and the person of the addressee are crucial to our understanding of the reading list in this oration, for Dio's recommendations are directly relevant and tailored to the recipient of the letter.²⁰ This is not an objective overview of great authors valued for their own qualities; it is a practical list for a mature statesman who is not very familiar with Greek literature. Dio explicitly states that he would offer a different programme to a lad (μειράκιον) or to a young man who was to withdraw from political life (18.5). The selection of authors presented here exclusively aims to guide a busy statesman (ἀνὴρ πολιτικός) who has no time for laborious training. Dio's point of departure is thus fundamentally different from that of Dionysius in *On Imitation*, and this, as we will see, results in a number of unconventional choices and judgements.

Who is Dio's addressee? Is he Roman or Greek, and what is his political status? Is he real or imaginary? These questions have been answered in different ways. Dio adopts a remarkably humble, almost subservient tone in the introduction of his letter (18.1):

Πολλάκις ἐπαινέσας τὸν σὸν τρόπον ὡς ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ἀξίου πρωτεύειν ἐν τοῖς ἀρίστοις, οὐδέποτε πρότερον ἐθαύμασα ὡς νῦν. τὸ γὰρ ἡλικίας τε ἐν τῷ ἀκμαιοτάτῳ ὄντα καὶ δυνάμει οὐδενὸς λειπόμενον καὶ ἄφθονα κεκτημένον, καὶ πάσης ἐξουσίας οὔσης δι' ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς τρυφᾶν, ὅμως ἔτι παιδείας ὀρέγεσθαι καὶ φιλοκαλεῖν περὶ τὴν τῶν λόγων ἐμπειρίαν καὶ μὴ ὀκνεῖν, μηδὲ εἰ πονεῖν δέοι, σφόδρα μοι ἔδοξε γενναίας ψυχῆς καὶ οὐ φιλοτίμου μόνον, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι φιλοσόφου ἔργον εἶναι.

Although I had often praised your character as that of a good man who is worthy to be first among the best, yet I never admired it before as I do now. For that a man in the very prime of life and second to no one in influence, who possesses great wealth and has every opportunity to live in luxury by day and night, should in spite of all this reach out for education also and be eager to acquire training in eloquent speaking, and should display no hesitation even if it should cost toil, seems to me to give proof of an extraordinarily noble soul and one not only ambitious, but in very truth devoted to wisdom.

Various scholars have suggested that this man, 'second to none in influence' (δυνάμει οὐδενὸς λειπόμενον) could be nobody else than Nerva

¹⁹ See von Arnim 1898: 139; Moles 1978: 93, n. 122.

²⁰ Bost-Pouderon 2008 rightly draws attention to the epistolary form of the text: she briefly compares Dio's letter with Dionysius' *Letter to Pompeius* and the two *Letters to Ammaeus*, and with Pliny's letters on literary topics; she concludes (p. 46) that *On Training for Public Speaking* is primarily a letter and not a miniature treatise.

before he became emperor (i.e., before 96 CE).²¹ Other scholars prefer to identify the man as Titus before he became emperor (i.e., before 79 CE).²² On the other hand, it has been argued that the addressee is a Greek man who has an important political function in one of the cities of Asia Minor.²³ Finally, there are scholars who believe that the addressee was not a real person at all: *On Training for Public Speaking* would be a rhetorical 'school exercise' that Dio wrote when he was young.²⁴

Two issues should be distinguished here: the opposition real/fictive and the opposition Greek/Roman. Even if he did not actually exist, the addressee could still be portrayed as Greek or Roman. To start with the latter issue, it seems highly improbable that a mature and influential Greek officer active in Asia Minor would not be familiar with Homer, Euripides, Xenophon and the Attic orators. For members of the Roman nobility of the first century CE the situation is slightly different. Many of them studied with a Greek rhetorician, but such training could be either a basic instruction or a more advanced education. Titus, who has been thought to be the addressee, enjoyed a thorough education in Greek rhetoric. According to Suetonius, Titus 'had a ready fluency in both Latin and Greek to such a degree that he could make a speech or compose a poem without preparation'.²⁵ As a mature man this (future) emperor definitely did not need Dio's basic instructions and can thus be ruled out as the addressee of *On Training for Public Speaking*.²⁶ But not every Roman

²¹ Valgimigli 1912: 72; Münscher 1920: 115; von Christ, Stählin and Schmid 1920: 363: 'Nerva vor seiner Thronbesteigung?'; Brancacci 2000: 244, n. 8. For Dio's relationship with the Flavian dynasty, see Sidebottom 1996. On Dio's attitude towards Rome, see Jones 1978 and Swain 1996: 187–241.

²² Desideri 1978: 137–42; Billault 2004: 515–18. Arguments against Titus are offered in Sidebottom 1996: 450.

²³ Von Arnim 1898: 140: 'Das Schreiben ist also vermutlich an einen höheren Gemeinde-beamten einer der grossen Griechenstädte Asiens gerichtet'; Moles 1978: 93 agrees ('probably Greek'), as does Sidebottom 1996: 450: 'an important local Greek official in a large Greek city of Asia Minor'.

²⁴ Hammer 1898: 838: 'eine bloße Schulleistung des schon frühe eilten Dio'; Lemarchand 1926: 6: 'un exercice de rhétorique'; more cautiously de Budé 1948: 12.

²⁵ Suet. *Tit.* 3. Eutropius 7.21 refers to Titus' Greek poems. Plin. *HN* pref. 5 praises Titus' eloquence and poetry. On Titus' rhetorical education, see Jones 1984: 7–11.

²⁶ Billault 2004: 516 cites Suetonius' information about Titus' eloquence and poetic skills in order to support his argument that Titus was Dio's student and the addressee of *On Training for Public Speaking*. I cannot agree with this, because Suetonius' description of Titus does not at all fit Dio's portrait of his statesman. Titus had a thorough rhetorical education *when he was a boy*: Suetonius praises his fluency in Greek and Latin in the third chapter of his biography, which deals with Titus' youth (3). The statesman in Dio's letter, on the other hand, did not receive sufficient literary education when he was young. Dio writes to a mature and mighty politician who is gifted (18.4) but has had very little training so far and is only now preparing himself for public speaking (18.6); he has not yet read Menander, Euripides and Homer (18.7), nor Lysias or Xenophon (18.11, 18.14).

statesman will have studied Euripides and Xenophon, let alone Aeschines or Hyperides. We know much less, for example, about Nerva's familiarity with Greek literature. Von Arnim has argued that Dio's addressee was Greek because Dio tells him that Xenophon could be a helpful guide both in the senate and before the people (καὶ ἐν βουλῇ καὶ ἐν δήμῳ, 18.17). According to von Arnim this advice must be directed to a Greek, because Romans would only turn to Greek rhetoric for intellectual development, not for practical usefulness.²⁷ This argument is not persuasive: Quintilian – Dio's contemporary – does actually point out that Greek literature can be practically useful for men who are active in Roman society. Euripides for example will be more useful than Sophocles 'to persons preparing themselves to plead in court'.²⁸ Hence, Dio's emphasis on political usefulness does not rule out the possibility that he wrote for a Roman friend, and some of his formulations do in fact suggest that we should think of a Roman rather than a Greek addressee. The useful guidance that Dio's addressee is supposed to find in Xenophon's *Anabasis* seems especially relevant to a man who is in charge of both generals (στρατηγοί) and soldiers (πληθος) and is closely connected to the members of royal families (βασιλικοί) (18.16–17):

καὶ ἀπορρήτοις δὲ λόγοις ὡς προσήκει χρῆσασθαι καὶ πρὸς στρατηγοὺς ἄνευ πλήθους καὶ πρὸς πλῆθος κατὰ²⁹ ταῦτο, καὶ βασιλικοῖς τίνα τρόπον διαλεχθῆναι, καὶ ἐξαπατῆσαι ὅπως πολεμίους μὲν ἐπὶ βλάβῃ, φίλους δ' ἐπὶ τῷ συμφέροντι, καὶ μάτην ταραττομένοις ἀλύπως τάληθες καὶ πιστῶς εἰπεῖν, καὶ τὸ μὴ ῥαδίως πιστεῦναι τοῖς ὑπερέχουσιν, καὶ οἷς ἐξαπατῶσιν οἱ ὑπερέχοντες καὶ οἷς καταστρατηγοῦσι καὶ καταστρατηγοῦνται ἄνθρωποι, πάντα ταῦτα ἱκανῶς τὸ σύνταγμα περιέχει.

How to hold secret conferences both with generals apart from the common soldiers and with the soldiers in the same way [i.e., apart from the generals]; the proper manner of conversing with kings and princes; how to deceive enemies to their hurt and friends for their own benefit; how to tell the plain truth to those who are needlessly disturbed without giving offence, and to make them believe it; how not to trust too readily those in authority over you, and the means by which such persons deceive their inferiors, and the way in which men outwit and are outwitted – on all these points Xenophon's treatise gives adequate information.

²⁷ Von Arnim 1898: 140: 'Wenn ein Römer sich mit griechischer Rhetorik befasst, so thut er es zum Zweck formaler Geistesbildung.'

²⁸ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.67: *iis qui se ad agendum comparant utiliore longe fore Euripiden.*

²⁹ Here I follow the text of Cohoon 1939; von Arnim inserts the negation οὐ before κατὰ.

This brings us to the second issue. If Dio does indeed suggest that his addressee is an influential Roman politician, how real is his letter? Neither the beginning nor the end of the letter has a salutation, which might make us suspicious.³⁰ More important, however, are the remarkable formulations of praise and admiration that Dio uses when addressing his mighty friend.³¹ As we have seen, Dio extensively commends his addressee for not displaying any hesitation in his eagerness to acquire training, ‘even if it should cost toil’ (μηδὲ εἰ πονεῖν δέοι): for Dio, this lack of hesitation is proof of a soul that is not only extraordinarily noble and ambitious, but even ‘philosophical’ (18.1). This is a rather limited understanding of philosophy, to say the least. As we have seen, Dionysius of Halicarnassus tells his readers that talent, instruction and hard work are indispensable – this is of course the standard view in rhetorical teaching.³² Dio, on the other hand, claims that not being afraid of toil (πόνος) reveals a philosophical nature. The contrast between the two positions becomes even more apparent when Dio (18.6) formulates his first and foremost piece of advice, which is unheard of in rhetorical teaching:

τοῦτο μὲν δὴ πρῶτον ἴσθι, ὅτι οὐ δεῖ σοι πόνου καὶ ταλαιπωρίας – τῷ μὲν γὰρ ἐπὶ πολὺ ἀσκήσαντι ταῦτα ἐπὶ πλεῖστον προάγει, τῷ δὲ ἐπ’ ὀλίγον χρησαμένῳ συλλήψει τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ὀκνηρὰν ποιεῖ προσφέρεισθαι, καθάπερ τοὺς ἀσυνήθεις περὶ σώματος ἀσκησιν εἴ τις κοπῶσσει βαρύτεροις γυμνασίοις, ἀσθενεστέρους ἐποίησεν – ἀλλὰ ὥσπερ τοῖς ἀήθεσι <τοῦ> πονεῖν σώμασιν ἀλείψεως δεῖ μᾶλλον καὶ κινήσεως συμμέτρου ἢ γυμνασίας, οὕτω σοὶ περὶ τοὺς λόγους ἐπιμελείας ἐστὶ χρεῖα μᾶλλον ἢ δονῆ μεμιγμένης ἢ ἀσκήσεως καὶ πόνου.

First of all, you should know that you have no need of toil or exacting labour; for although, when a man has already undergone a great deal of training, these contribute very greatly to his progress, yet if he has had only a little, they will lessen his confidence and make him diffident about getting into action; just as with athletes who are unaccustomed to the training of the body, such training weakens them if they become fatigued by exercises which are too severe.

No laborious training, therefore, and no difficult texts; instead, Dio offers a list of authors who are relatively accessible and directly relevant to a politician of the first century CE. In addressing a non-specialist, politically engaged reader, Dio’s letter agrees with contemporary scholarly and

³⁰ Cf. Bost-Pouderon 2008: 41. The form of the letter is in fact only articulated by the use of the second person singular (σύ, passim) and the use of the verb γράφειν (to write) in 18.19 and 18.20.

³¹ E.g., Dio 18.3: ἐπαίνῳ σε καὶ θαυμάζω σε, ‘I praise you and admire you’.

³² See Kraus 1996 on *exercitatio*.

philosophical works of the imperial period: one might for example compare the approach of Plutarch, who ‘presents his elite readership with a very practical, unsystematic, and non-rigorous kind of philosophy’.³³ The relaxed, practical and down to earth approach to παιδεία that characterises both Dio and Plutarch clearly differs from the more rigorous and serious tone that Dionysius adopts in his rhetorical treatises – a contrast that seems to reflect a difference between (late) Hellenistic and imperial literature. Dio’s advice not to work too hard has been taken seriously by modern scholars – and we cannot entirely exclude the possibility that there was indeed a Roman statesman who requested a shortcut to *paideia*. In a different context Lucian draws a similar comparison between readers and athletes, pointing out that in training one should alternate between hard exercise and relaxation.³⁴ But although Dio’s advice does not stand alone, we can be quite sure that his ancient audience enjoyed his playful reversal of the traditional emphasis on hard work. This remarkable reversal is in line with other aspects of his letter, which is highly unusual and innovative: Dio transforms the traditional reading list of classical highlights, as represented by Dionysius’ *On Imitation*, into a survey that is practically relevant to the specific needs of a politician of his age. In doing so he portrays himself as quite different from the stern professors of rhetoric. Dio’s deviations from the rhetorical tradition invite us to read *On Training for Public Speaking* as a fanciful adaptation of the genre of rhetorical imitation.

The Poets

Let us now turn to the actual reading lists in the epitome of *On Imitation* and *On Training for Public Speaking*. It will be helpful to compare Quintilian’s list of Greek literature (*Institutio oratoria* 10.1.46–84) as a point of reference: on the one hand, Quintilian was familiar with some of Dionysius’ rhetorical works (and possibly with the reading list in *On Imitation*); on the other hand, he was a contemporary of Dio.³⁵ Where Dio and Quintilian agree and differ from Dionysius, their agreement could

³³ Van Hoof 2010: 41. On Plutarch’s intended readers, see van Hoof 2010: 19–40.

³⁴ Lucian, *Ver. hist.* 1.1: ‘Men interested in athletics and in the care of their bodies think not only of condition and exercise but also of relaxation in season; in fact, they consider this the principal part of training. In like manner, students, I think, after much reading of serious works may profitably relax their minds and put them in better trim for future labour.’ Lucian, of course, is advertising his own *True Stories*.

³⁵ On the relationship between Dionysius’ *On Imitation* and Quintilian book 10, see the references in n. 9 above.

be explained by the development of literary taste between the Augustan Age and the Flavian Age (although other explanations must also be taken into consideration). The three authors use the same categories and they roughly present them in the same order: first comes poetry, then the prose genres; in Dionysius the order is historiography, philosophy, oratory; in Dio and Quintilian the order is historiography, oratory, philosophy.³⁶

According to the epitome (2.1–14), Dionysius recommends four epic poets (Homer, Hesiod, Antimachus and Panyasis), four lyrical poets (Pindar, Simonides, Stesichorus and Alcaeus), three tragedians (Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides) and the comedians, of whom only Menander is mentioned by name. Quintilian (10.1.46–72) offers a similar but extended list: his epic poets and tragedians are identical with those of Dionysius, but he adds a number of poets (mostly Hellenistic) whom Dionysius left out (Apollonius, Aratus, Theocritus, Nicander, Euphoriion, Tyrtaeus, Callimachus, Philetas);³⁷ furthermore, he mentions Archilochus instead of Pindar, and he adds the names of Aristophanes, Eupolis and Cratinus to that of Menander, who ‘alone would be sufficient’. Menander is the very first poet mentioned in Dio’s reading list, followed by Euripides and Homer (18.6–8). For Dio, that is all: his politician will have no time for lyric and elegiac poetry, iambics or dithyrambs (18.8).

The enormous difference between Dionysius and Dio is self-evident. But a closer look at their comments will further illuminate their distinct approaches. Dionysius starts with Homer, who immediately is presented as an exception: where other authors must be imitated for a specific quality, Homeric poetry must be imitated in its entirety (2.1), ‘character, emotion, grandeur, distribution and all other qualities’.³⁸ Having discussed the other epic poets and lyric poets, he focuses on the three tragedians: here Aeschylus is mentioned first (2.10), and this position corresponds to his superior status:

³⁶ Cf. Rutherford 1998: 43.

³⁷ Quintilian (10.1.54) remarks that the Alexandrian grammarians ignored their contemporaries. This observation might suggest that Dionysius, who also leaves out the Hellenistic poets, was following an Alexandrian reading list. But it is also natural for Dionysius not to include Hellenistic authors: from the perspective of Dionysian classicism, the period after Alexander (and Demosthenes) was an age of literary decline, dominated by ‘Asian’ influence: see Hidber 1996 and de Jonge 2014. Cf. Kim in this volume.

³⁸ The same qualities of Homer’s poetry are praised and discussed in the scholia. See Nünlist 2009: 139–49 for scholia commenting on Homer’s emotional effects (139–49), on styles and registers (219–21) and on characterisation (238–56). Nünlist 2009: 224 points out that the observations on Homeric style in the scholia on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* presumably aimed not only at interpretation but also at imitation. The rhetorical and the exegetical traditions of literary criticism are thus closely connected.

‘Ο δ’ οὖν Αἰσχύλος πρῶτος ὑψηλός τε καὶ τῆς μεγαλοπρεπείας ἐχόμενος, καὶ ἡθῶν καὶ παθῶν τὸ πρέπον εἰδώς, καὶ τῇ τροπικῇ καὶ τῇ κυρίᾳ λέξει διαφερόντως κεκοσμημένος, πολλαχοῦ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς δημιουργὸς καὶ ποιητὴς ἰδίων ὀνομάτων καὶ πραγμάτων, Εὐριπίδου δὲ καὶ Σοφοκλέους καὶ ποικιλώτερος ταῖς τῶν προσώπων ἐπεισαγωγαῖς.

Aeschylus, who comes first, is sublime and possesses grandeur; he knows propriety in the use of character and emotion, he excels in adorning himself with figurative as well as common vocabulary, and he is often himself also a creator and maker of words and things; he shows more variety than Sophocles and Euripides in the introductions of new characters.

In the next section (2.11–13) Dionysius presents a comparison between Sophocles and Euripides. Both have their own qualities, but Dionysius seems to have more sympathy for Sophocles, who excels in painting character and emotion; he preserves the dignity (ἀξίωμα) of characters, and he uses poetic vocabulary, although he often falls from grandeur (μέγεθος) into empty boasting. Euripides, on the other hand, likes complete reality and what is close to actual life (τῷ βίῳ τῷ νῦν). In the rest of the section Euripides is mainly described in negative terms: he does *not* preserve propriety and modesty; he is *less* successful than Sophocles in painting noble characters and emotions; he accurately represents what is undignified, unmanly and mean (ἄσεμνον καὶ ἄνανδρον καὶ ταπεινόν); and finally he is neither sublime (ὑψηλός) nor plain (λιτός), as he uses the mixed style. It is clear that the whole σύγκρισις of Sophocles and Euripides builds on the schematic contrast between high and low: sublime versus plain style, elevated versus low characters, and heroic versus realistic subject matter. A very short reference to comedy finally includes the name of Menander, whom Dionysius – like Quintilian and Dio – admires for his content as well as his style.

Turning now to Dio, the first thing to notice is of course that his list is much shorter, as it contains only three names. Dio regards Menander and Euripides as the most useful poets for his addressee (18.6):

τῶν μὲν δὴ ποιητῶν συμβουλευσαίμ’ ἄν σοι Μενάνδρῳ τε τῶν κωμικῶν μὴ παρέργως ἐντυχάνειν καὶ Εὐριπίδῃ τῶν τραγικῶν, καὶ τούτοις μὴ οὕτως, αὐτὸν ἀναγινώσκοντα, ἀλλὰ δι’ ἐτέρων ἐπισταμένων μάλιστα μὲν καὶ ἡδέως, εἰ δ’ οὖν, ἀλύπτως ὑποκρίνασθαι· πλείων γὰρ ἢ αἴσθησις ἀπαλλαγέντι τῆς περὶ τὸ ἀναγινώσκειν ἀσχολίας.

So let us consider the poets: I would counsel you to read Menander of the writers of comedy quite carefully, and Euripides of the writers of tragedy, and to do so, not casually by reading them to yourself, but by having them read to you by others, preferably by men who know how to render the lines

pleasurably, but at any rate so as not to offend. For the effect is enhanced when one is relieved of the preoccupation of reading.

Dio's list literally reverses Dionysius' advice: Menander is the last poet to be mentioned in *On Imitation*, but he is the first one mentioned in *On Training for Public Speaking*. Whereas Dionysius portrays Aeschylus as the best tragedian and presents Sophocles as superior to Euripides, Dio recommends Euripides alone.³⁹ Even more striking is Dio's remarkable advice not to read these poets but to have them recited by somebody else: this recommendation flagrantly contradicts the traditional view that students should be actively engaged and involved in the reading process. Let us compare Quintilian's advice (10.1.19):

Lectio libera est nec ut actionis impetu transcurrit, sed repetere saepius licet, sive dubites sive memoriae penitus adfigere velis. Repetamus autem et tractemus.

Reading is independent: it does not pass over us with the speed of a performance, and you can go back over it again and again if you have any doubts or if you want to fix it firmly in your memory. Let us go over the text again and work on it.

Quintilian's instruction represents the traditional perspective of the teacher of rhetoric who knows what is good for his students.⁴⁰ Dio gives his mighty politician the opposite advice. This is another remarkable reversal of rhetorical teaching that might be interpreted as a piece of irony, which contributes to the light-hearted character of Dio's letter.

Only after Menander and Euripides is Homer mentioned, as the third poet to be read: 'Homer comes first and in the middle and last' ('Ὅμηρος δὲ καὶ πρῶτος καὶ μέσος καὶ ὕστατος, 18.7). To be sure, this laudatory statement expresses a sentiment that Dio shares with his contemporaries, as Lawrence Kim has observed.⁴¹ But the irony is of course that Homer comes neither first nor in the middle, but indeed *last* in Dio's list of poets, after Menander and Euripides. As we have seen, Dionysius and Quintilian

³⁹ In *Oration* 52 Dio adopts a very different attitude to Greek tragedy: there Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides (and their *Philoctetes* plays) are equally admired; the difference between the two orations is explained by the purpose of *Oration* 18 and its addressee, who needs only those authors who are practically useful for political eloquence. *Oration* 52 on the other hand evaluates literature in its own terms and for its own sake. On *Oration* 52, see Luzzatto 1983.

⁴⁰ See also Dion. Hal. *De imit.* 5.7 (epitome).

⁴¹ Cf. Kim 2010: 5. The usefulness of Homer as a model for rhetorical imitation is not only indicated in rhetorical treatises, but also in ancient commentaries. For observations on Homeric speeches in the scholia, see Nünlist 2009: 316–26.

start their reading lists with Homer, who was widely regarded as the source of all Greek literature. Dio's formulation pays tribute to Homer, but the order in which he ranks his three preferred poets strongly suggests that he finds the plays of Euripides and Menander more useful guides for a politician than the Homeric epics.⁴²

The discussion of Menander and Euripides is important for our purpose, because Dio here acknowledges that his advice does not correspond to that of other critics (18.7):

καὶ μηδεὶς τῶν σοφωτέρων αἰτιάσεται με ὡς προκρίναντα τῆς ἀρχαίας κωμωδίας τὴν Μενάνδρου ἢ τῶν ἀρχαίων τραγωδῶν Εὐριπίδην· οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ ἰατροὶ τὰς πολυτελεστάτας τροφὰς συντάττουσι τοῖς θεραπέϊας δεομένοις, ἀλλὰ τὰς ὠφελίμους. πολὺ δ' ἂν ἔργον εἴη τὸ λέγειν ὅσα ἀπὸ τούτων χρήσιμα· ἢ τε γὰρ τοῦ Μενάνδρου μίμησις ἅπαντος ἥθους καὶ χάριτος πᾶσαν ὑπερβέβληκε τὴν δεινότητα τῶν παλαιῶν κωμικῶν, ἢ τε Εὐριπίδου προσήνεια καὶ πιθανότης τοῦ μὲν τραγικοῦ ἀπαθανατισμοῦ καὶ ἀξιώματος τυχὸν οὐκ ἂν τελέως ἐφικνοῖτο, πολιτικῶς δὲ ἀνδρὶ πάνυ ὠφέλιμος, εἴ τι δὲ ἦθη καὶ πάθη δεινὸς πληρῶσαι, καὶ γνώμας πρὸς ἅπαντα ὠφελίμους καταμίγνυσσι τοῖς ποιήμασιν, ἅτε φιλοσοφίας οὐκ ἄπειρος ὢν.

And let no one of the more 'advanced' critics chide me for selecting Menander's plays in preference to the old comedy, or Euripides in preference to the early writers of tragedy. For physicians do not prescribe the most costly (πολυτελεστάτας) nourishments for their patients, but those which are salutary (ὠφελίμους). Now it would be a long task to enumerate all the advantages (χρήσιμα) to be derived from these writers; indeed not only has Menander's portrayal of every character and every charming trait surpassed all the skill of the early writers of comedy, but the suavity and plausibility of Euripides, while perhaps not completely attaining to the grandeur of the tragic poet's way of deifying his characters, or to his high dignity, are very useful (ὠφέλιμος) for the man in public life; and furthermore, he cleverly fills his plays with an abundance of characters and moving incidents, and strews them with maxims useful (ὠφελίμους) on all occasions, since he was not without acquaintance of philosophy.

Dio's consistent emphasis on the usefulness of Menander and Euripides stands in sharp contrast to Dionysius' discussion of tragedy and comedy. We have seen that, for Dionysius, the sublime Aeschylus comes first, followed by Sophocles and Euripides. It is possible, then, that Dionysius – or the teachers of rhetoric who agreed with his views – could be counted among the anonymous 'more advanced critics' (σοφώτεροι)

⁴² Dio's challenging of Homer thus fits into the patterns of Hellenistic and imperial reception of Homer discussed by Greensmith in this volume.

from whom Dio distances himself. His evaluation of the Greek tragedians seems to reflect the taste of his age: Quintilian (10.1.67–8) agrees with Dio that Euripides is more useful, and he responds to the supporters of Sophocles (like Dionysius) in terms that echo Dio's defence of Euripides:

Sed longe clarius inlustraverunt hoc opus Sophocles atque Euripides, quorum in dispari dicendi via uter sit poeta melior inter plurimos quaeritur. Idque ego sane, quoniam ad praesentem materiam nihil pertinet, iniudicatum relinquo. Illud quidem nemo non fateatur necesse est, iis qui se ad agendum comparant utiliore longe fore Euripiden. Namque is et sermone (quod ipsum reprehendunt quibus gravitas et coturnus et sonus Sophocli videtur esse sublimior) magis accedit oratorio generi, et sententiis densus, et in iis quae a sapientibus tradita sunt paene ipsis par, et in dicendo ac respondendo cuilibet eorum qui fuerunt in foro disertis comparandus.

But far more distinction was brought to this genre by Sophocles and Euripides. Their styles are very different, and there is much dispute as to which is the better poet. I leave this question unresolved, because it has nothing to do with my present subject. What everybody must admit is that Euripides will be the more useful to persons preparing themselves to plead in court. His language (censured by some who find Sophocles' dignity, tragic grandeur and resonance more sublime) is closer to the norm of oratory; he is full of striking thoughts (*sententiae*), and almost a match for the philosophers in expressing their teaching; his technique of speech and debate is comparable to that of anyone who has been famous for eloquence in the courts.

Here Quintilian sides with Dio against Dionysius, or perhaps we should formulate it like this: Dio and Quintilian represent a more practical perspective on Greek literature that turns away from the purely aesthetic approach of their colleague who lived a century earlier. Both Quintilian and Dio emphasise that the discussion should not be about sublimity or grandeur, but about usefulness; and both regard Euripides as the most useful tragedian for political speakers, praising the philosophical quality of his sayings (γνώμαι, *sententiae*).⁴³ Quintilian also agrees with Dio on the exemplarity of Menander, one of the first imitators of Euripides (10.1.69):⁴⁴

hunc et admiratus maxime est, ut saepe testatur, et secutus, quamquam in opere diverso, Menander, qui vel unus meo quidem iudicio diligenter lectus

⁴³ Dio 18.7; Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.68.

⁴⁴ Russell 1989: 299 notes the agreement between Dio and Quintilian concerning the usefulness of Euripides and Menander.

ad cuncta quae praecipimus effingenda sufficiat: ita omnem vitae imaginem expressit, tanta in eo inveniendi copia et eloquendi facultas, ita est omnibus rebus personis adfectibus accommodatus.

Menander, as he often testifies, admired Euripides greatly and indeed imitated him, though in a different genre. And a careful reading of Menander alone would, in my judgement be sufficient to develop all the qualities I am recommending: so complete is his representation of life, so rich his invention and so fluent his style, so perfectly does he adapt himself to every circumstance, character and emotion.

The enthusiasm for Menander and Euripides in Dio and Quintilian seems typical of the period in which these authors were writing. The plays of the two poets were composed in clear and relatively accessible language (as opposed to those of Aeschylus, for example) and they contained lots of quotable maxims. The poetry of Menander, with its light humour and morally unproblematic erotic scenes, was indeed often recited at symposia throughout the Roman Empire.⁴⁵ Plutarch, contemporary with Dio, frequently cites lines from both Euripides and Menander in his *Table-Talk*.⁴⁶ In one of the conversations Menander is specifically presented as providing the most appropriate entertainment at dinner: 'New Comedy has become so completely a part of the symposium that we could chart our course more easily without wine than without Menander'.⁴⁷

As far as their reading lists of poets are concerned, it turns out that there is no beginning of an agreement between Dionysius and Dio. Where Dionysius recommends a series of twelve poets with various qualities, Dio mentions only three names. Dionysius' list starts with Homer and ends with Menander, Dio's list starts with Menander and ends with Homer. In some respects Dio's preferences seem to reflect the taste of his age: both Quintilian and Dio focus on usefulness and hence prefer Euripides and Menander to Aeschylus and Sophocles. It is plausible that Dionysius' list represents a traditional Greek approach, whereas Dio and Quintilian display a more modern taste that is tailored to the needs of Roman society. For Roman readers Euripides was more accessible than

⁴⁵ On 'Menander at dinner parties', see Nervegna 2013: 120–200. Plutarch mentions readings of Menander at banquets at *Plut. Quaest. conv.* 5, 673b; 7.8, 712b; and *Comp. Ar. et Men.* 854b.

⁴⁶ Menander is quoted in *Plut. Quaest. conv.* 3.6, 654d; 4.3, 666f; 7.5, 706b; 9.5, 739f; Euripides is quoted in *Quaest. conv.* 1, 612d; 1.2, 615d; 1.4, 622a; 1.5, 622c; 2.1, 630b, 630 e; 2.10, 643f; 2.10, 644d; 4.1, 661b; 661f; 4.2, 665c; 4.2, 666c; 7.1, 699a; 7.8, 713d; 7.10, 716b; 8.1, 718a; 9.1, 737a; 9.15, 747d.

⁴⁷ *Plut. Quaest. conv.* 7.8, 712b. Translation Minar in Minar, Sandbach and Helmbold 1961. On the ancient reception of Euripides and Menander as poets of 'common Greek', see Nervegna 2013: 110–16.

Aeschylus or Sophocles; and we should not forget that Menander was widely appreciated as the great inspirer of Roman comedy.

In the evaluation of drama, then, there is correspondence between Dio and Quintilian (contra Dionysius), which seems to reflect the preferences of the Flavian Age as opposed to the Augustan Age. In other respects, however, Dio radically turns away from all traditional rhetoric, departing not only from Dionysius but also from the contemporary position of Quintilian: Homer comes last, listening to a recitation is better than reading a poem, and hard work should be avoided. Dio's reading list, then, is not only more practical than Dionysius' *On Imitation*, but also more unconventional, more surprising and more amusing for readers who are familiar with the clichés of rhetorical education.

The Historians

For Dionysius' treatment of the historians we do not depend on the epitome (3.1–12), because he cites this part of *On Imitation* in the *Letter to Pompeius* (3.2–6.11).⁴⁸ Dionysius offers an extensive comparison of Herodotus and Thucydides; he then adds Xenophon and Philistus, and finally Theopompus.⁴⁹ Quintilian (10.1.73–5) lists the same Greek historians, but he leaves out Xenophon, whom he includes among the philosophers (10.1.82, see below); instead he briefly and critically touches on the names of Ephorus and Clitarchus and, with more appreciation, Timagenes (Augustan Age), 'born long after these' (*longo post intervallo temporis natus*).⁵⁰ Dio (18.10) mentions four historians: Herodotus, Thucydides, Theopompus and Ephorus. However, only two of these four are explicitly recommended for imitation: the active politician should read Thucydides and Theopompus; Herodotus is merely enjoyable, while Ephorus is tedious and careless. Like Quintilian, Dio postpones the discussion of

⁴⁸ *De imit.* fr. 7 (Aujac 1992) = fr. 5 (Battisti 1997): on the connection between the two texts, see Heath 1989a and Weaire 2002.

⁴⁹ Philistus of Syracuse (c. 430–356 BCE, *FGrH* 556) wrote a *History of Sicily*; he was the advisor of Dionysius I and II. Theopompus of Chios (fourth century BCE, *FGrH* 115) wrote an *Epitome of Herodotus* in two books and a *Hellenika* in twelve books. Philistus was included in the inscriptional remains of the 'catalogue' of the gymnasium library at Tauromenium; Theopompus in that of the gymnasium library at Rhodes: see n. 11 above.

⁵⁰ Ephorus of Cyme (c. 405–330 BCE, *FGrH* 70) wrote a *History* in thirty books, covering both Greek and eastern history. Clitarchus of Colophon (fourth/third century BCE, *FGrH* 137) wrote about Alexander. Timagenes of Alexandria (*FGrH* 88) came to Rome as a captive in 55 BCE; he wrote *On Kings*, a universal history from the earliest times down to the period of Caesar.

Xenophon to the category of ‘the Socratics’ (18.13–17): Xenophon alone gets more space than all other authors together.

The differences between Dionysius and Dio are enormous. In Dionysius’ discussion, two points are made very clear: Herodotus is superior to Thucydides because of the more uplifting and more enjoyable contents of his works; and Xenophon is good, but only as far as he imitates Herodotus, who is stylistically superior. Dionysius’ top ranking of historians is therefore (1) Herodotus, (2) Thucydides and (3) Xenophon. Dio, on the other hand, claims that Thucydides is more useful than the pleasant Herodotus, and he regards Xenophon as by far the most useful author in the entire corpus of Greek texts. In other words, Dio’s ranking of these three authors would be the complete reverse of Dionysius’ podium: (1) Xenophon, (2) Thucydides and (3) Herodotus; but as Dio counts Xenophon among the Socratic philosophers, there is no direct comparison of Xenophon with Herodotus and Thucydides.

Let us look more closely at Dionysius’ comments on the Greek historiographers. In his σύγκρισις of Herodotus and Thucydides, he draws a distinction between subject matter and style.⁵¹ In the discussion of style (*Pomp.* 3.16–21), the two historians divide the points. Thucydides is superior in conciseness, the representation of emotions, and force and intensity; Herodotus is to be imitated for the portrayal of character, persuasion and delight, and propriety; the two historians divide the points for purity of language (Ionic versus Attic dialect), vividness, and grandeur and impressiveness. In the discussion of subject matter (*Pomp.* 3.2–15) Herodotus is the clear winner: he has a more uplifting and profitable subject, a better beginning and ending of his history, and a more appropriate selection of events; Herodotus is also superior in the distribution of his material and in the attitude that he adopts towards the events and characters.⁵² After this extensive comparison, Dionysius introduces Xenophon and Philistus, who are presented as the followers of Herodotus and Thucydides respectively. The fact that they are presented as later imitators suggests that they are inferior to their predecessors (4.1–3):

Ξενοφῶν δὲ καὶ Φίλιστος οἱ τούτοις ἐπακμάσαντες οὔτε φύσεις ὁμοίας εἶχον
οὔτε προαιρέσεις. Ξενοφῶν μὲν γὰρ Ἡροδότου ζηλωτὴς ἐγένετο κατ’
ἀμφοτέρους τοὺς χαρακτήρας, τὸν τε πραγματικὸν καὶ τὸν λεκτικόν . . .

⁵¹ On Dionysius’ comparison of Herodotus and Thucydides (*Pomp.* 3.2–21), see Heath 1989b: 71–89, Wiater 2011: 132–49 and de Jonge 2017.

⁵² Wiater 2011: 147–8 rightly explains Dionysius’ preference for Herodotus over Thucydides as resulting from his concept of classicism.

ὁ δὲ λεκτικός πῃ μὲν ὁμοίος Ἡροδότου, πῇ δὲ ἐνδεέστερος. καθαρὸς μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν ἱκανῶς καὶ σαφῆς <καὶ ἐναργής> καθάπερ ἐκεῖνος· ἐκλέγει δὲ ὀνόματα συνήθη τε καὶ προσφυῇ τοῖς πράγμασι, καὶ συντίθησιν αὐτὰ ἡδέως πάνυ καὶ κεχαρισμένως οὐχ ἥττον Ἡροδότου. ὕψος δὲ καὶ κάλλος καὶ μεγαλοπρέπειαν καὶ τὸ λεγόμενον ἰδίως πλάσμα ἱστορικὸν Ἡρόδοτος ἔχει.

Xenophon and Philistus, who flourished at a later time than these writers, did not resemble one another either in their nature or in the principles they adopted. Xenophon modelled himself upon Herodotus in both aspects, subject matter and language . . . In style he is in some respects similar to Herodotus, and in others inferior. Like him he is decidedly pure and lucid in vocabulary. The words he chooses are familiar and correspond to the nature of the subject, and he puts them together with no less marked attractiveness and charm than Herodotus. But Herodotus also possesses sublimity, beauty and impressiveness, and what is called by the special name of 'the historical cast of style'.

Xenophon is in some respects similar to his model Herodotus, but he is inferior as far as aesthetic qualities like sublimity (ὕψος), beauty (κάλλος) and grandeur (μεγαλοπρέπεια) are concerned. Dionysius adds that in many passages Xenophon 'goes on too long' (μακρότερος γίνεται τοῦ δέοντος) and is inferior to Herodotus in characterisation; on strict examination he is even found to be 'careless' (ὀλιγωρός) in this respect (*Pomp.* 4.4). Philistus imitates Thucydides, but he is inferior in the beauty of his language (καλλιλογία) (*Pomp.* 5). Theopompus, finally, is praised for his subjects, his industry, his philosophical comments and his Isocratean style; but this style is sometimes artificial and his fairytales are childish (*Pomp.* 6).

Like Dionysius, Dio (18.10) starts with Herodotus, who is however immediately disqualified because of his storytelling:

Ἡροδότῳ μὲν οὖν, εἴ ποτε εὐφροσύνης σοι δεῖ, μετὰ πολλῆς ἡσυχίας ἐντεύξῃ. τὸ γὰρ ἀνειμένον καὶ τὸ γλυκὺ τῆς ἀπαγγελίας ὑπόνοιαν παρέξει μυθῶδες μᾶλλον ἢ ἱστορικὸν τὸ σύγγραμμα εἶναι. τῶν δὲ ἄκρων Θουκυδίδης ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ καὶ τῶν δευτέρων Θεόπομπος.

As for Herodotus, if ever you want real enjoyment, you will read him when quite at your ease, for the easy-going manner and charm of his narrative will give the impression that his work deals with stories rather than with actual history. But among the foremost historians I place Thucydides, and among those of second rank Theopompus.

Dio's observation that Herodotus writes myth (μυθῶδες) rather than history (ἱστορικόν) obviously alludes to Thucydides' famous remarks about his own rejection of myth (τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες, 1.22.4). Whereas

Dionysius presents an elaborate comparison between the two classical historians that results in a victory for Herodotus, Dio dismisses Herodotus' historical value in just one sentence and appropriates Thucydides' point of view in using the term *μυθῶδες*. Theopompus receives mixed praise. Dio asserts that he is useful, because there is 'a rhetorical quality' (*ῥητορικόν τι*) in the narrations of his speeches, and he is 'neither incompetent nor negligent in expression' (*οὐκ ἄδύνατος οὐδὲ ὀλίγωρος περὶ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν*). There follows another doubtful compliment: 'the slovenliness of his diction is not so bad as to offend you' (*τὸ ῥάθυμον περὶ τὰς λέξεις οὐχ οὕτω φαῦλον ὥστε σε λυπῆσαι*).

Although Dio assigns Xenophon to the 'Socratics', not to the historians, I will here cite Dio's praise of Xenophon (18.14), in order to bring out the contrast with Dionysius' critical treatment of the same author:

Ξενοφῶντα δὲ ἔγωγε ἡγοῦμαι ἀνδρὶ πολιτικῷ καὶ μόνον τῶν παλαιῶν ἔξαρκεῖν δύνασθαι· εἴτε ἐν πολέμῳ τις στρατηγῶν εἴτε πόλεως ἀφηγούμενος, εἴτε ἐν δήμῳ λέγων εἴτε ἐν βουλευτηρίῳ, εἴτε καὶ ἐν δικαστηρίῳ μὴ ὡς ῥήτωρ ἐθέλοι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς πολιτικός καὶ βασιλικὸς ἀνὴρ τὰ τῷ τοιοῦτῳ προσήκοντα ἐν δίκῃ εἰπεῖν· πάντων ἄριστος ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ καὶ λυσιτελέστατος πρὸς ταῦτα πάντα Ξενοφῶν. τὰ τε γὰρ διανοήματα σαφῆ καὶ ἀπλὰ καὶ παντὶ ῥᾶδιᾳ φαινόμενα, τότε εἶδος τῆς ἀπαγγελίας προσηνὲς καὶ κεχαρισμένον καὶ πειστικόν, πολλὴν μὲν ἔχον πιθανότητα, πολλὴν δὲ χάριν καὶ ἐπιβολήν, ὥστε μὴ λόγων δεινότητι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ γοητεία εὐοικεῖναι τὴν δύναμιν.

It is my own opinion that Xenophon, and he alone of the ancients, can satisfy all the requirements of a man in public life. Whether one is commanding an army in time of war, or is guiding the affairs of state, or is addressing a popular assembly or a senate, or even if he were addressing a court of law and desired, not as a professional master of eloquence merely, but as a statesman or a royal prince, to utter sentiments appropriate to such a character at the bar of justice, the best exemplar of all, it seems to me, and the most profitable for all these purposes is Xenophon. For not only are his ideas clear and simple and easy for everyone to grasp, but the character of his narrative style is attractive, pleasing, and convincing, being in a high degree true to life in the representation of character, with much charm also and effectiveness, so that his power suggests not cleverness but actual wizardry.

Dio here contradicts the views of Dionysius. As we have seen, Dionysius criticised Xenophon's characterisation (*Pomp.* 4.4) and his lack of sublimity (*Pomp.* 4.3); Dio on the other hand praises Xenophon's portrayal of characters and his witchcraft (*γοητεία*), a term that evokes associations

with Gorgias' overwhelming rhetoric.⁵³ Xenophon's impact on Dio is indeed sublime (18.16):⁵⁴ ἐμοὶ γοῦν κινεῖται ἡ διάνοια καὶ ἐνίοτε δακρύω μεταξύ τοσούτων τῶν ἔργων τοῖς λόγοις ἐντυγχάνων ('my own heart, at any rate, is deeply moved and at times I weep even as I read his account of all those deeds of valour'). Dio praises the speeches in the *Anabasis* with their overwhelming force (18.15), and he concludes that Xenophon's work informs the reader on all sorts of political communication (18.16), a passage that I have cited above.⁵⁵ To sum up, the contrast between the approaches of Dionysius and Dio could not be more clearly articulated than in their treatment of Xenophon. Where Dionysius criticises Xenophon for failing to reach the high level of Herodotus, Dio regards him as the one and only model who alone can satisfy all the needs of a statesman.⁵⁶ Although he does not go as far as Dio, Quintilian agrees with his contemporary that Xenophon is a very useful model of delight and rhetorical persuasiveness (10.1.82):

Quid ego commemorem Xenophontis illam iucunditatem inadfectatam, sed quam nulla consequi adfectatio possit? – ut ipsae sermonem finxisse Gratiae videantur, et quod de Pericle veteris comoediae testimonium est in hunc transferri iustissime possit, in labris eius sedisse quandam persuadendi deam.

I need hardly mention Xenophon's charm – effortless, but such as no effort could achieve. The Graces themselves seem to have moulded his style, and we may justly apply to him what a writer of old comedy said of Pericles, that some goddess of Persuasion sat upon his lips.

Both Quintilian and Dio are more positive than Dionysius about Xenophon; above we have seen that they are also more positive about Euripides. In both cases, Dionysius prefers the beauty and sublimity of the earlier authors (Herodotus among the historians, Aeschylus and Sophocles among the tragedians), whereas Dio and Quintilian admire the usefulness of the later author (Xenophon and Euripides). This preference for Xenophon and Euripides (and Menander) in Dio and Quintilian can be explained in two ways.

On the one hand, both Dio and Quintilian are primarily interested in practical usefulness for rhetoricians rather than in aesthetic qualities; it is the latter aspects of Xenophon that Dionysius finds unsatisfactory. Dio

⁵³ Gorg. *Hel.* 10.

⁵⁴ The author of *On the Sublime* also wrote a (lost) book *On Xenophon*: see *Subl.* 8.1 and cf. below, p. 343.

⁵⁵ See above, p. 329.

⁵⁶ On Dio's admiration for Xenophon, see Jones 1978: 8.

and Quintilian emphasise Xenophon's rhetorical persuasiveness, which is directly relevant to a statesman who is training his eloquence. Although Dionysius likewise claims to write for future orators, his actual evaluative comments are less concerned with practical considerations relevant to Roman society than those of his later colleagues.

On the other hand, the agreement between Dio and Quintilian (and their disagreement with Dionysius) also reflects the evolution of literary taste. In the course of the first and second centuries CE Xenophon became indeed very popular in both Greek and Latin literature.⁵⁷ On the Greek side, we should first of all think of Arrian (c. 86–160 CE), who emulated Xenophon in his *Anabasis of Alexander* and *Cynegeticus*. Longinus, who probably lived in the first century CE, frequently cites Xenophon in *On the Sublime*, but he also wrote a separate treatise *On Xenophon*.⁵⁸ Xenophon is also a primary model of ἀφέλεια (simplicity) and γλυκύτης (sweetness) in Hermogenes' *On Types of Style* (second century CE) and a model of simplicity in Pseudo-Aelius Aristides' *On Simple Discourse* (second century CE).⁵⁹ In Latin literature it is especially authors of the first century CE who admire Xenophon: whereas Cicero had still been critical,⁶⁰ Quintilian, Tacitus and Frontinus were all fond of Xenophon, whose influence is visible in their works.⁶¹ One reason for his popularity was indeed his sweet 'simplicity' (ἀφέλεια), which was praised by rhetoricians: as Dio states, Xenophon's ideas are 'clear and simple and easy for everyone to grasp' (σαφῆ καὶ ἀπλᾶ καὶ παντὶ ῥᾶδιᾳ φαινόμενα, 18.14). Dio's observations on Xenophon's *Anabasis* suggest another reason for the popularity of Xenophon: the world of the *Anabasis* was in some ways closer to the early Roman Empire than the classical Greek world described by Thucydides. As Dio's observations bring out, Xenophon's world is one of secret communication between kings, generals and soldiers; this may

⁵⁷ On the reception of Xenophon in Rome, see Münscher 1920: 70–106; for his popularity in Greek imperial literature, see Münscher 1920: 106–213 and Patillon 2002: 13–16.

⁵⁸ See *Subl.* 8.1. Cf. Porter 2016: 201. Dio 18.16 (cited above) describes the feelings that Xenophon arouses in him in Longinian terms. Russell 1989: 300 notes a connection between Dio 18 and *Subl.* 17.1.

⁵⁹ Hermog. *Id.* 2.3.11–20 (Patillon 2012) (= 326–8 Rabe); 2.4.17–18 (Patillon 2012) (= 335 Rabe). Cf. Münscher 1920: 115. Pseudo-Aristid. *Ars* 2. See Patillon 2002: 16: 'Le style de Xénophon avait donc, à l'époque qui nous intéresse, des partisans résolu et il n'y a rien d'étonnant à ce qu'on en a fait, dans son genre, un modèle.'

⁶⁰ Cic. *Orat.* 32: Xenophon's style is 'sweeter than honey, but far removed from the wrangling of the forum' (*melle dulcior, sed a forensi strepitu remotissimus*). Cf. also *Orat.* 62: Xenophon's style lacks vigour.

⁶¹ Münscher 1920: 90–5; in the second century CE references to Xenophon in Latin literature become rarer.

indeed have been one of the many appeals of Xenophon's writing in the Roman world.

Dio's praise of the *Anabasis* bears witness to what we may call a Xenophontic revolution: whereas Cicero rejected Xenophon as a rhetorical model and Dionysius was relatively critical, Dio, Longinus, Pseudo-Aelius, Aristides and Quintilian all embrace Xenophon's charm, his simplicity and his sublimity. This remarkable development is reflected in his status: Xenophon is no longer a historian, but a Socratic philosopher.

The Philosophers

Dionysius deals with the philosophers (epitome *On Imitation* 4.1–3) before he concludes his reading list with the orators; in Dio and Quintilian the order of the last two categories is reversed: Dio ends with 'the Socratics' (18.13–17), Quintilian with the philosophers (10.1.81–4). Dio singles out just one Socratic writer: as we have seen above, he extensively praises Xenophon as the most useful author, who 'can satisfy all the requirements of a man in public life'. If the epitome is trustworthy, Xenophon is also the first name mentioned in Dionysius' list of philosophers, followed by Plato, Aristotle and 'his students'.⁶² Quintilian is more specific: he adds Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus and presents his philosophers in the following order: Plato, Xenophon, the 'other Socratics', Aristotle, Theophrastus (and the Stoics, who are not to be imitated).

Dionysius praises the charm, elegance and grandeur of Plato and Xenophon, and Aristotle's forcefulness, learning, and clear and pleasing style. Quintilian focuses on Plato's Homeric style and Xenophon's charm (see above), and he praises Aristotle's learning, pleasing style, invention and variety.⁶³ The brilliance of language in Theophrastus is divine; the eloquence of the early Stoics is criticised (10.1.84). We may conclude that there is considerable overlap between Dionysius and Quintilian in their evaluations of Plato, Xenophon and Aristotle. Quintilian and Dio share an interest in 'Socratic writers' and their graceful style – the term 'Socratics' does not figure in the epitome of *On Imitation*, but the reference to Plato and Xenophon as one pair (4.2) may indicate that Dionysius likewise distinguished a category of Socratic writers.⁶⁴ By far the most remarkable element in the three lists of philosophers, however, is Dio's extensive praise

⁶² The reference to the Pythagoreans in *De imit.* 4.1 is probably corrupt.

⁶³ For Plato's Homeric style, cf. Longinus, *Subl.* 13.3–4.

⁶⁴ In *Comp.* 16.4 Dionysius refers to 'the Socratic Plato'.

of Xenophon,⁶⁵ with the omission of all other philosophers. With another touch of irony, Dio remarks that ‘it would be a long task to eulogise the other Socratic writers; even to read them is no light thing’ (τοὺς μὲν δὴ ἄλλους μακρὸν ἂν εἴη ἔργον ἐπαινεῖν καὶ ἐντυγχάνειν αὐτοῖς οὐ τὸ τυχόν).

The Orators

Dionysius selects six Attic orators: Lysias, Isocrates, Lycurgus, Demosthenes, Aeschines and Hyperides (epitome *On Imitation* 5.1–7). In his work *On the Ancient Orators*, Isaeus takes the place of Lycurgus; the other five names are identical. The six orators are there presented in two triads, and the order is slightly different: Lysias, Isocrates, Isaeus; Demosthenes, Hyperides, Aeschines.⁶⁶ Quintilian (10.1.76–80) also lists six orators, substituting Demetrius of Phalerum for Lycurgus/Isaeus. Quintilian’s order is different, as he starts with the best orators: Demosthenes, Aeschines, Hyperides, Lysias, Isocrates, Demetrius of Phalerum.⁶⁷ The fact that both Dionysius and Quintilian select six orators shows that the ‘canon’ of Attic orators was not yet fixed or standard in their age: Caecilius of Caleacte, a contemporary of Dionysius, wrote a treatise *On the Style of the Ten Orators*, which may have listed the orators who would in later times be considered the canonical ten: Antiphon, Andocides, Lysias, Isocrates, Isaeus, Demosthenes, Aeschines, Lycurgus, Hyperides, Dinarchus.⁶⁸

Dionysius and Quintilian praise their six orators in emphasising different qualities. Lysias is pure, plain and elegant (and sufficient for the purpose of usefulness, Dionysius adds). Isocrates is polished and graceful, austere and impressive, morally instructive, and more suitable for reading than for speaking in the courts. Dionysius states that Lycurgus is amplificatory and elevated; Quintilian prefers Demetrius, who is the ‘last’ orator of the Attic school. Demosthenes is energetic and majestic; his grave and

⁶⁵ See above, p. 341.

⁶⁶ Dion. Hal. *Orat. Vett.* 4.5. The treatises on Lysias, Isocrates, Isaeus and Demosthenes have been preserved.

⁶⁷ Dionysius cites Demetrius of Phalerum in *Dem.* 5.6. But this orator (born c. 350 BCE) lived probably too late to be included in his list of orators, because Dionysius believes that Attic eloquence started to decline after the death of Alexander (*Orat. Vett.* 1). Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.1.80 mentions that Demetrius ‘is said to have been the first to set oratory on the downward path’ (*is primus inclinasse eloquentiam dicitur*).

⁶⁸ See the fragments of Caecilius (ed. Woerther 2015) and Pseudo-Plutarch, *Vitae decem oratorum*. It is uncertain when the canon of ten Attic orators was first proposed: see Worthington 1994 and Smith 1995. On the canon of the Attic orators and the reading lists of Dionysius, Dio and Quintilian, see de Jonge forthcoming 2022.

gracious style overwhelms the judges (*On Imitation* 5.4), and for Quintilian he is simply 'the greatest' (*princeps*, 10.1.76). In *On Demosthenes* Dionysius likewise presents Demosthenes as the absolute highlight of classical oratory: Demosthenes combines all styles and qualities of his predecessors (8.4). Aeschines is 'less energetic' (ἀτονώτερος) than Demosthenes but impressive, vivid and agreeable; for Quintilian, on the other hand, Aeschines is 'fuller and more expansive' (*plenior et magis fusus*, 10.1.77). Hyperides is goal-oriented (εὐστοχος); he surpasses Lysias in composition, and everyone in invention; his narratives are subtle and balanced. Quintilian is slightly less enthusiastic about this orator: Hyperides has extraordinary charm and point, but 'he is more equal to minor, not to say trivial causes' (10.1.77).

Dio's discussion of orators (18.11) is very different, although he mentions almost all the orators that Dionysius lists, leaving out only Isocrates: Dio's Attic orators are Demosthenes, Lysias, Hyperides, Aeschines and Lycurgus. He acknowledges that Demosthenes and Lysias are the best; and he mentions some of the characteristics that are traditionally connected to these models, including Demosthenes' vigour, forcefulness and copiousness, and Lysias' brevity, simplicity, coherence and concealed cleverness. Nevertheless, for the purpose of his reading list Dio (18.11) prefers three other Attic orators:

πλὴν οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ σοι συμβουλεύσαιμι τὰ πολλὰ τούτοις ἐντυγχάνειν, ἀλλ' Ὑπερείδῃ τε μᾶλλον καὶ Αἰσχίνῃ. τούτων γὰρ ἀπλούτεραι τε αἱ δυνάμεις καὶ εὐληπτότεραι αἱ κατασκευαὶ καὶ τὸ κάλλος τῶν ὀνομάτων οὐδὲν ἐκείνων λειπόμενον. ἀλλὰ καὶ Λυκούργῳ συμβουλεύσαιμ' ἂν ἐντυγχάνειν σοι, ἐλαφροτέρῳ τούτων ὄντι καὶ ἐμφαίνοντί τινα ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἀπλότητα καὶ γενναιότητα τοῦ τρόπου.

However I should not advise you to read these two chiefly [i.e. Demosthenes and Lysias], but Hyperides rather and Aeschines; for the faculties in which they excel are simpler, their rhetorical embellishments easier to grasp, and the beauty of their diction is not one whit inferior to that of the two who are ranked first [Demosthenes and Lysias]. But I should advise you to read Lycurgus as well, since he has a lighter touch than those others and reveals a certain simplicity and nobility of character in his speeches.

This crucial passage brings out the contrast between two essentially different approaches to classical literature: it is the difference between Dionysius' *On Imitation* and Dio's *On Training for Public Speaking*. Demosthenes and Lysias may be the best orators, as Dio acknowledges; but they are not the most useful reading for an active statesman.

Dio's next step is even more revolutionary. We have observed that Dionysius' list includes only authors of the classical period, while ignoring all post-classical writers. The reason for this choice is given in the preface to *On the Ancient Orators* (1.1–7): after the death of Alexander the Great the Attic Muse was replaced by a harlot from Asia, who stands for vulgar and tasteless rhetoric.⁶⁹ Therefore, Demosthenes (384–322 BCE) is the last great orator of the classical past, after whom the decline of eloquence sets in.⁷⁰ In agreement with this historical framework Dionysius never mentions writers from the third and second centuries BCE except in order to criticise them: he strongly objects to the styles of Hellenistic historians like Phylarchus of Athens, Duris of Samos and Polybius.⁷¹ Dio does not list writers of the third or second century either; but he does recommend four orators who can be dated to the first century BCE (18.12):

ἐνταῦθα δὴ φημι δεῖν, κἄν εἴ τις ἐντυχὼν τῇ παραινήσει τῶν πάνυ ἀκριβῶν αἰτιόσεται, μὴδὲ τῶν νεωτέρων καὶ ὀλίγον πρὸ ἡμῶν ἀπείρως ἔχειν· λέγω δὲ τῶν περὶ Ἀντίπατρον καὶ Θεόδωρον καὶ Πλουτίωνα καὶ Κόνωνα καὶ τὴν τοιαύτην ὕλην.

At this point I say it is advisable – even if some one, after reading my recommendation of the consummate masters of oratory, is going to find fault – also not to remain unacquainted with the more recent orators, those who lived a little before our time; I refer to the works of such men as Antipater, Theodorus, Plution, and Conon, and to similar material.

Antipater may be the father of Nicolaus of Damascus (first century BCE); Theodorus of Gadara was the teacher of emperor Tiberius; Plution and the grammarian Conon were probably also active in the Augustan Age.⁷² Dio has thus taken the unusual step of including in his reading list four authors who lived shortly before him (and who were the contemporaries of Dionysius), and he anticipates the criticism that his unconventional advice will generate. Indeed, in praising the exemplarity of Greek orators of the first century BCE Dio's letter *On Training* not only stands apart from contemporary Greek rhetoric and literature, which generally looks back to the Attic orators of classical Greece, but also gives an intriguing corrective to the history of rhetoric presented by Flavius Philostratus some 150 years

⁶⁹ See Hidber 1996 and de Jonge 2014; on Atticism and Asianism, see also the introduction and the chapter by Kim in this volume.

⁷⁰ Demosthenes is also the last great author of the classical past in Longinus' *On the Sublime*. On Demosthenes as a model of the sublime in Longinus and Caecilius of Caleacte, see Innes 2002 and Porter 2016: 127–9 and 189.

⁷¹ See *Comp.* 4.15. ⁷² For Plution, see Sen. *Suas.* 1.11. Conon's Attic style is praised by Photius.

later: in the *Lives of the Sophists*, Philostratus jumps from Aeschines (fourth century BCE) to Nicetes of Smyrna (second half of the first century CE), devoting no single word to the orators who lived in the intermediate ages.⁷³ Dio's motivation for including more recent orators in the list is intriguing (18.13):

αἱ γὰρ τούτων δυνάμεις καὶ ταύτη ἄν εἶεν ἡμῖν ὠφέλιμοι, ἧ οὐκ ἂν ἐντυγχάνοιμεν αὐτοῖς δεδουλωμένοι τὴν γνώμην, ὥσπερ τοῖς παλαιοῖς. ὑπὸ γὰρ τοῦ δύνασθαι τι τῶν εἰρημένων αἰτιάσασθαι μάλιστα θαρροῦμεν πρὸς τὸ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐπιχειρεῖν ἡμεῖς, καὶ ἥδιόν τις παραβάλλει αὐτὸν ὃ πείθεται συγκρινόμενος οὐ καταδεέστερος, ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ βελτίων ἂν φαίνεσθαι.

For the powers they [i.e. recent orators] display can be more useful to us, because, when we read them, our judgement is not fettered and enslaved, as it is when we approach the ancients. For when we think that we are able to criticise what has been said, we are most encouraged to attempt the same things ourselves, and we find more pleasure in comparing ourselves with others when we are convinced that in the comparison we should be found not inferior to them, with the chance, occasionally, of being even superior.

The final words of this passage suggest a kind of weariness with the idealising, hardcore classicism of traditional rhetoric. The uncompromising admiration and exclusive imitation of the Attic orators of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE could, as Dio suggests, reduce the student's confidence. The motif of enslavement is remarkable: we could interpret it as a reversal of an argument that we find in other classicising critics. Dionysius and Longinus believe that reading the speeches of Demosthenes can to a certain extent revive the freedom of classical Greece and hence contribute to the feeling of Greekness of their readers.⁷⁴ Dio on the other hand points out that our judgement is enslaved when we constantly try to imitate only the orators of classical Athens: one will feel more free, it is suggested, when reading the speeches of the Augustan Age.

Conclusion

Various scholars in the past have stated that there is a general correspondence between the reading lists of Dionysius and Dio. This belief is

⁷³ Philostr. *VS* 1, §10–11. See introduction above, p. 23.

⁷⁴ On Dionysius' classicism, see Wiater 2011. The motif of enslavement also figures prominently in the final chapter of Longinus' *On the Sublime* (44). Longinus adduces two explanations for the lack of sublime literature in his own time: a political and a moral explanation. In both cases, people are 'enslaved': they are the slaves of political rulers or of their insolence and shamelessness. Dio 18.12 seems to reverse Longinus' argument: for Dio we are not enslaved by the present, but rather by the classical past.

mistaken. The differences between Dionysius and Dio are in fact strong and numerous. Dio's letter *On Training for Public Speaking* forms a radical departure from Dionysius' reading list, or, to be precise, from the type of lists that Dionysius represents – for we do not know whether Dio was actually familiar with Dionysius' *On Imitation*. Dionysius prefers the sublime Aeschylus and Sophocles; Dio recommends reading Euripides and Menander. Dionysius finds Herodotus superior to Xenophon; Dio regards Xenophon as the most useful of all ancient writers. For Dionysius the Attic orators are sacred; Dio recommends reading the orators of Augustan Rome next to those of classical Athens. In Dionysius' *On Imitation* various authors are praised for their beauty, grandeur and sublimity; Dio, on the other hand, is only interested in practical usefulness and political eloquence. I have explained these discrepancies in three ways.

First there is a difference between the intended audiences of the two works, which implies a difference in purpose. Dionysius writes for all students who wish to develop their skills of writing and teaching. In that sense his *On Imitation* has of course a practical purpose; but as far as we can tell, the work made no reference to the political circumstances of the Roman world and did not discuss the usefulness of classical Greek authors for the types of eloquence that were actually needed by lawyers or politicians of the Augustan world. Dio, on the other hand, instructs an active statesman, whose time for reading books is very limited. Dio's recommendations are therefore directly relevant and tailored to the affairs of an influential politician in the Roman Empire: Xenophon in particular is put forward as the ideal guide for political eloquence and communication with kings, generals and soldiers.

Second, the reading lists of Dionysius and Dio are the products of two different ages. We have seen that in various points Dio and his contemporary Quintilian agree with each other, while contradicting the views of Dionysius. Most importantly Quintilian and Dio agree that Menander and Euripides, very popular in the first century CE, are more useful than Aeschylus or Sophocles, and that Xenophon is a 'Socratic writer' whose persuasive style rewards imitation. Unlike Dionysius, Quintilian and Dio also include post-classical authors in their reading lists. In turning from Dionysius to Dio and Quintilian, we move from one type of classicism to another: from the hardcore, archaising, democratic, idealising classicism of Dionysius, with its emphasis on beauty and sublimity, to the more pragmatic, modern and imperial classicism of Dio, with its emphasis on practical usefulness. The typical models of classical Greece, which are so important for Dionysius' construction of Greek identity (Herodotus,

Thucydides, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Demosthenes), are partly replaced by the models that fit Flavian Rome (Xenophon, Euripides, Menander, Aeschines).

Finally there is a difference in the genres of the two works: a serious rhetorical treatise versus a light-hearted literary letter. This difference is reflected in the roles adopted by the two instructors. Dionysius represents the traditional teacher of rhetoric: in this respect, Quintilian and Dionysius are in one team. Dio, on the other hand, adopts a more relaxed attitude, either because he has to be careful not to overdo his role of teacher in writing to an important statesman who is hierarchically superior; or perhaps because his letter consciously and playfully attempts to depart from the rules of traditional rhetoric. This is most clearly seen in two of Dio's most remarkable pieces of advice. Dionysius and Quintilian want their students to be actively engaged in reading classical literature; Dio on the other hand advises his friend to have the texts read to him by others. Dionysius and Quintilian instruct their students to work hard, but Dio thinks that too much exercise will not be good for his addressee. We may now add a third piece of innovative advice: Dio tells his addressee that he should not write himself, but dictate to a secretary (18.18); Quintilian on the other hand strongly objects to 'the luxury of dictation' (*Institutio oratoria* 10.3.19–21). It is in these unconventional recommendations that Dio's letter explicitly turns away from rhetorical teaching and becomes a more fanciful literary construct, which was perhaps really useful to a historical recipient, but certainly also pleasant and entertaining to a wider audience. *On Training for Public Speaking* is neither a rhetorical treatise nor a school exercise, but a sophisticated literary letter, which ironically engages with the well-known genre of the Greek reading list and turns it into something practical, innovative and enjoyable.