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<https://doi.org/10.26485/AAL/2021/67/8>

**THE ‘ARCHEOLOGY’ OF HISTORIOGRAPHY AS A RHETORICAL AGON.
ON THE JUXTAPOSITION OF HELLENIC WRITERS
IN THE *EPISTULA AD POMPEIUM* BY DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS¹**

ABSTRACT Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his short theoretical treatise entitled “A Letter to Pompeius” (*Epistula ad Pompeium*) presents an exciting discussion on rhetoric mastership and scholarship written in an epistolary genre. The treatise begins with critical remarks Dionysius once addressed to Plato. The author admits to his addressee (Cn. Pompeius Geminus) that he is enchanted by Plato’s dialogues. From the trio of Greek speech-makers who are recognized as the most brilliant in this respect – Isocrates, Plato, and Demosthenes (such was Dionysius’s selection) – the Halicarnassean rhetorician deliberately dwells on Plato (Lysias, Isocrates, Demosthenes and other Greek orators are the subject of his other aesthetic works). Embarking on a wider discussion, Dionysius repeatedly points out that these studies are always aimed at establishing the truth. The longest chapter, 3 compares works of the first Greek historians and the mastery of their style. Dionysius points out the rivalry of the many masters of the genre, but the main characters of the chapter are Herodotus and Thucydides. The “father of history” (Dionysius’ contemporary and paragon) surpasses the Athenian historian on all counts examined by the author. This article examines συγγραφεύς / συγγραφεῖς or συγγραφή occurring in the *Pomp.* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The rhetorician, when referring to Herodotus, Thucydides (ch. 3), Theopompus (ch. 6), Hellanicus, Charon (3.7) and the Greek historians en masse (6.7), calls them “syngraphers”. Dionysius uses the word συγγραφή only as applied to historical works of Theopompus of Chios (6.2, 3, 6). The article also draws upon the Halicarnassian philologist’s other works in which he mentions syngraphers-historians, who are set off against poets and orators. Dionysius regards the words συγγραφεύς, ὁ ἱστορικὸς, ἱστοριογράφος as equivalent and interchangeable. In this work, Dionysius examines different styles of ancient writers. Here, by examining the works by the authors of the 5th and 4th centuries BC (written three to four centuries before his time) he seems to be performing a peculiar experiment of theoretical “archaeology”. But the rhetoric and philological “archaeological” study conducted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus reveals not only his scholarly interest in the analysis of works of the writers of the past, but also his focus on the present – both in literary and cultural aspects. Plato is under the influence of Thucydides, but Thucydides is inferior to Herodotus, Herodotus produces works that surpass those of Charon and Hellanicus, while Theopompus is superior in style to Demosthenes himself and surpasses Isocrates – the “most brilliant” rhetoricians of the past. By presenting this gallery of names, Dionysius shows comparison as *agon* – of styles, genres, authors, their subject matters, intensive narrative, and he himself contends with the writers of the past. Seeing mastery of rhetoric as a peculiar *agon* stretching over centuries and across the *agon* of rhetoricians, philosophers and historiographers, Dionysius identifies the circle of best writers, and himself joins it. He claims that in the scholarly rhetoric “the truth is dearer still” and establishes the criteria to judge the classic writers. And the critic realizes that he will be judged according to the same (his own) criteria.

Key words: Dionysius of Halicarnassus, “A Letter to Pompeius”, historiography, rhetoric, early Greek historians Hellanicus, Charon, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Philistus, Theopompus, style, *syngraphers*, Plato, philosophy, ancient Greek orators Lysias, Demosthenes, literary criticism, polylogue, *agon*, influence

¹ The research was carried out thanks to funding of Russian Foundation for Basic Research (project No. 19-09-00022a “‘Forefathers of history’: The oldest representatives of ancient historical science”).

„ARCHEOLOGIA” HISTORIOGRAFII JAKO RETORYCZNA GRA.
O PORÓWNANIU GRECKICH AUTORÓW W „LIŚCIE DO POMPEIUSZA”
DIONIZJOSA Z HALIKARNASU

ABSTRAKT Dionizjos z Halikarnasu w teoretycznym traktacie zatytułowanym „List do Pompejusza” zawarł dyskusję na temat retorycznego mistrzostwa i nauki. Traktat rozpoczynają krytyczne uwagi Dionizjosa, adresowane do Platona. Autor przyznaje jednak, iż jest zachwycony dziełami Platona. Pośród trzech greckich mówców, uznawanych za najwybitniejszych – Izokratesa, Platona, Demostenesa – Dionizjos z Halikarnasu celowo studiuje Platona. Prowadzi szeroką dyskusję. Dionizjos wielokrotnie podkreśla, że wskazani autorzy mają na celu ustalenie prawdy. Najdłuższy rozdział oznaczony jako 3, dotyczy historyków greckich i stylu ich prac. Dionizjos zauważa rywalizację mistrzów, ale głównymi bohaterami rozdziału stali się Herodot i Tukidydes. Dionizjos zauważa, że „ojciec historii” przewyższa ateńskiego historyka. Prezentowany artykuł dotyczy użycia słowa *συγγραφέως*. Słowa tego retor użył w odniesieniu do Herodota, Tukidydesa, Hellanikosa i innych historyków. Dionizjos wskazuje na styl autorów, tematykę ich prac.

Słowa kluczowe: Dionizjos z Halikarnasu, „List do Pompejusza”, historiografia, retoryka, wcześni historycy greccy – Hellanikos, Charon, Herodot, Tukidydes, Ksenofont, Filistos, Teopompos, oratorzy, Lysias, Demostenes, krytyka literacka, *agon*

1. Introduction (About the optical judgement of an ancient source)

The philosopher M.K. Mamardashvili, beginning his first lecture on ancient philosophy, speaks about the history of philosophic thought as “a history of a single, though protracted, (here and elsewhere, italics are mine – A. S.) attempt people make at philosophizing”.² This view is interesting when we consider one domain of scholarship as a coherent, single research path. The train of philosophizing is understood as a synthesis of different ways of interrogation of those engaged in a “dialogue”, a “polylogue”, to be more precise, for it involves a wide range of interlocutors. This “exchange” is protracted, centuries old, and it will carry on as long as man is concerned with eternal issues, which, similar to the Magnesian stone,³ attract new generations of thinkers and scholars to a single field.

Experience of each “interlocutor” is unique and limited, but the experiences of all participants make this polyphonic dispute a unified and, in point of fact, endless interaction. And here the *agonal* aspect is one of the most important components of the aggregate inter-contextual “polylogue”. Contention among inquirers presupposes that everyone who has joined the common *agon* with his predecessors, contemporaries and associates of generations to come not only could try to comprehend and

understand the world, but, first and foremost, could find their own positions. The same refers to the history of rhetoric, literature studies, history of historiography proper (about this later on), and various fields of humanities (and not only).

The above-adduced Mamardashvili’s “formula” put me on to the optical judgement of a classical source I had to refer to when studying the theme of reception of the early Hellenic historians and philosophers in Antiquity. This sketch will speak of the literary rhetorical *agon* contained in the work of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a historian of the second half of the 1st century BC.

2. ... sed magis amica veritas: Ancient writers, Zoilus’ criticism and the unveiling of truth

In his small theoretical, epistolary, treatise “A Letter to Pompeius” (*Epistula ad Pompeium Geminum*) Dionysius set forth an exciting discussion about the rhetoric prowess and scholarship of the Ancient Greeks. The work starts with critical remarks the author once made about Plato. The grammarian’s opinion of the great philosopher did not accord with that of Cn. Pompeius Geminus, to whom it was addressed (the latter, as follows from Dionysius’ letter, was a great admirer of Plato.⁴

² Mamardashvili 1997: 7.

³ *Μαγνήτις / Ἡράκλεια λίθος*, if to use Plato’s well-known metaphor (*Ion*. 533d-e); yet, the Athenian philosopher uses it on another occasion and in a different context.

⁴ On Gn. Pompeius Geminus see, for example: Roberts 1900: 439-440; Goold 1961; Hidber 1996: 7-8; Fornaro 1997: 4; Aujac 2002a: 145, n. 1; Aujac 2002b: 29, 71, 72, 73 s., 161; de Jonge 2008: 26, 27 (with bibliography in nn. 138-141), 28, n. 149, 64, n. 85, 265, n. 57; Matijašić 2018: 67, 70, 72-73; de Jonge,

Here is the beginning of the treatise:

“I have received with great pleasure the scholarly letter you sent me. Zeno, our common friend, has supplied you (so you write) with a copy of my treatises. In going through them and making them your own, on the whole you admire them, but are dissatisfied, you say, with one portion of their contents, namely, the criticism of Plato. Now you are right in the reverence you feel for that writer, but not right in your view of my position” (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.1).⁵

The author of the letter admits that he himself has been fascinated by Plato’s skill of verbal expression (ταῖς Πλατωνικαῖς ἐρμηνείαις). Dionysius states that he has always shown deference to all creators who gave their minds to the common good (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.2). Of the three Ancient Greek writers whom the grammarian of Halicarnassus calls “the most brilliant” (λαμπρότατοι) – Isocrates, Plato and Demosthenes (such is Dionysius’ selection, *ibid.* 1.5), – it is Plato’s style he chooses to dwell upon.⁶ He devotes special literary and aesthetic works (some of which have never reached us) to Demosthenes, Isocrates, Lysias, Isaeus, Aeschines and other Greek orators. Dionysius discusses matters of writing style in his monumental works: “On combination of words” and “On Ancient Orators”, in the extant fragments of the treatise “On imitation” and others.⁷

Dionysius begins his elucidation by saying that criticizing classical works does not mean disapproving of their authors. The student of rhetoric admits that he regards Plato “as a great man who had reached the divine” (ὡς ἀνδρὶ μεγάλῳ καὶ ἐγγύς τῆς θείας ἐληλυθότι φύσεως, 2.2) and states that his aim is not to attack Plato or, on the contrary, to create an encomium in his honour, not to condemn or justify the philosopher, but to “study different styles”, by pointing out his strength and weaknesses.

Dionysius writes: “I admit to my sacrilege if I have at least one work containing any carping remarks at Plato *the way Zoilus was apt to make*” (*Pomp.* 1.4). The reference to Plato’s contemporary, Zoilus of Amphipolis, (ca. 400-ca. 330 BC) is not fortuitous. This sophist, grammarian, historiographer and orator was well-known for his attacks at classics and contemporaries – Homer, Plato, Isocrates; he was branded under the cognomen of “Homeromastix” (Ὁμηρομάστιξ – “Scourge of Homer”), and for his severe criticism he was labelled “the rhetoric cur”.⁸ Here Dionysius compares him to Zoilus without condemning him; in the same chapter of his treatise the Halicarnassian classes the orator of Amphipolis among other τηλικούτοι ἄνδρες⁹ who criticized Plato’s teaching, finding fault in his works and ridiculing him. Yet it was Zoilus who was the talk of the town with philologists.¹⁰ The established ancient tradition

Hunter 2019: 8-9, 33 – here the authors of the Introduction to the collection on Dionysius of Halicarnassus note that his addressee, Cn. Pompeius Geminus, may have belonged to a circle of learned Greeks (he could have been a freedman of the Roman general and politician, Cn. Pompeius Magnus?), “who carried Roman citizenship, a Roman name and a Roman identity” (with reference to Thomas Hidber, who presents a discussion about this person: Hidber 1996: 7, n. 50).

⁵ Translated by W.R. Roberts in “The Three Literary Letters”: Roberts 1901: 89.

⁶ In *Pomp.* 2.1 Dionysius says that this treatise will relate everything he wrote on Plato in another theoretical work on the Attic Orators (ἐν τῇ περὶ τῶν Ἀττικῶν πραγματεία ῥητόρων); see Dion. Hal. *De Dem. dict.* 2-7.

⁷ Selectively: Christ 1889: 474-479; Roberts 1910; Bonner 1939; Sacks 1983; Fox 1993; Hidber 1996; Reid 1996; Reid 1997; Weaire 2002; Weaire 2005; Walker 2005; de Jonge 2008; Osipova 2009; Strogetsky 2009; Osipova 2011a; Wiater 2011; Osipova 2013; Rushkin 2014: 185-189; Osipova 2015; Rushkin 2016; Matijašić 2018; Burrow 2019: 64-73; Meins 2019; Osipova 2019; Hunter 2019; Ivashkiv-Vashchuk 2020; Osipova 2021; Viidebaum 2021; Hanink 2021. On Dionysius of Halicarnassus as a literary critic, on the problems of his rhetorical works and his method there is a considerable

body of literature, as evidenced by the bibliographical list in the new collective monograph devoted to the scholar of Halicarnassus of the age of August: Hunter, de Jonge (eds.) 2019 (review of this edition: Poletti 2019; Nicholson 2020; Miano 2020; Friedman 2020); also see the part of the new monograph examining language, style and ethos in the ancient literary criticism: Jónsson 2021: 31-38 (review of the latest papers on the rhetorical works of Dionysius), 39-43, 132-134, 139-144 *et al.*

⁸ See Ael. *Var. hist.* 11.10: “Zoilus of Amphipolis, the one who wrote *against* Homer, Plato and other [authors] ... Zoilus was called the ‘rhetorical cur’ (Κύων ῥητορικός)”, and *ibid.*: “He always vilified people, did nothing but make enemies, and was amazingly quarrelsome (ψογερός ἦν ὁ κακοδαίμων)”.

⁹ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.16: “Aristoteles, and next Cephisodorus, and Theopompus, and Zoilus, and Hippodamas, and Demetrius, and many others”.

¹⁰ Novokhatko 2020: 113. On Zoilus and his method, see the comprehensive article by I.V. Shtal (Shtal 1975: 335-360) that features the apology of principles of literary criticism by this philologist and sophist. Drawing upon the evidence provided by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and scholia (from Porphyry), the author notes, “the orator Zoilus could and was to offer, as is ‘usual’ with orators, ... criticism of Homer, and this criticism, likewise

(and then the further European tradition) portrays the ardent “rhetorical cur” as a paragon of radical and odious criticism: spiteful, mean-spirited, and cantankerous. He condemned Homer for depicting gods as wicked, heroes as ludicrous and their behaviour as illogical.

Yet, according to the proverbial “Aristoteles” maxim, *amicus (mihi) Plato, sed magis amica veritas*. And embarking on the exposition of his views on Plato’s works, Dionysius of Halicarnassus keeps noting that any investigation (surely, a true one!) aims at *laying bare the truth*.¹¹

that of Zoilus and others toward Plato, may have pursued a particular aim – “to establish the truth” (Shtal 1975: 344). The scholar comes to the conclusion that Zoilus through his activities was “laying the foundations for the future: the Alexandrian school of philology” (Shtal 1975: 356). Schooled in the art of rhetoric by Polycrates, the Athenian orator and sophist (5th-4th centuries BC), Zoilus marked a certain stage along the path of the Homer hermeneutics (as well as that of Plato, and not only) from Athens to Alexandria (see the above-mentioned article by A. Novokhatko). I.V. Shtal examines the evidence provided by ancient and Byzantine sources about Zoilus, including those by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Shtal 1975: 335-344), adduces examples of criticism and interpretations of Homer by the orator from Amphipolis, who painstakingly searched for all sorts of faults in the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey” (Shtal 1975: 347-356). On Zoilus also see: Apfel 1938: 250-252; Radermacher 1951: 198-200; Buffière 1956: 22-25; Fraser 1970; Gärtner 1964b; Gärtner 1978 (both articles in *Kleiner Pauly* and *Realencyclopädie* together with the most significant literature of the 19th-20th centuries); Branham 1996: 84-85 (here Zoilus is shown as a “minor figure” among the early cynics: “prototypical or minor figures such as Antisthenes or Zoilus”, “a Cynic as marginal as Zoilus”); Lockwood, Browning 1996 (= 2012); Matthaïos 2002; Szlezák 2012: 18-19; Williams 2013 (a corpus of fragments and evidences); Goulet-Cazé 2018: 421-436 (a most detailed of the latest reviews and studies on Zoilus and the subject matter of his works); Pavlova 2019 (on the remark made by Aristoteles in the last-but-one part of the “Poetics” [1461b], that may have been aimed against criticism of Zoilus, based on the wrong interpretation of the sources: analysis of three fragments ascribed to Zoilus in which the orator of Amphipolis highlights the discrepant details and tries to mock not Homer’s text but his own – injected – ideas of him); Novokhatko 2020: 112-120 (with selected bibliography: p. 112, n. 92). I will also indicate a new resource, ‘Brill’, which contains articles from “Lexicon of Greek Grammarians of Antiquity” (Regali 2020).

¹¹ Note by Gabriella Ottone: “È noto che la ricerca della verità era l’essenza stessa della speculazione platonica, e di quella filosofica in generale...; pur a fronte di questo, nell’ *Epistola a Pompeo* Dionigi impostava l’apologia della propria critica antiplatonica sull’insinuazione

“But when he wishes to determine what is most excellent in some walk of life and what is the best among a number of deeds of the same class, he ought to apply the most rigorous investigation and to take account of every quality whether good or bad. For this is the surest way of discovering truth, than which there is no more precious boon (ἡ γὰρ ἀλήθεια οὕτως εὐρίσκεται μάλιστα, ἢς οὐδὲν χρῆμα τιμώτερον)” (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.3).¹²

Only by ἐξέτασις can one elucidate ἀλήθεια,¹³ and with this noble aim in view, according to the scholar of Halicarnassus, he is determined to “juxtapose certain good [authors] with other good [authors]” (ἀγαθοὺς ἀγαθοῖς ἀντεξετάζων, Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.17). Comparisons that Dionysius uses here are *demonstrations of rivalry* among the best writers of the past (on the model of τηλικούτοι ἄνδρες, as he points out).

3. The rhetorician’s criticism of ancient authors from Plato to Theopompus (A review of and commentaries on Dion. Hal. *Pomp.*)

Let us examine the main points of “The Letter to Pompeius” by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

i. The treatise begins with judgements of Plato.¹⁴ The first chapter speaks about the principles of the Plato criticism. The author chooses “Phaedrus”, in which Socrates, the Athenian philosopher (= Plato), argues with the orator Lysias (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.10).¹⁵ This work, after three

che il filosofo avesse falsato la verità” (Ottone 2017: 104, here with reference to Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.14).

¹² Roberts 1901: 91.

¹³ Cf. Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.3; 6; onwards in the same chapter: “Many renounced his (Plato’s – A. S.) teaching and found fault in his works..., ridiculed him not out of envy or spite, but out of the desire to *establish the truth* (τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐξετάζοντες)” (ibid. 1.16). On the discussion of the nature of historical truth and practical applicability of historical knowledge based on the literary (rhetorical) and historiographic material of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, see F. Meins’ monograph (Meins 2019). I’ll refer to the reviews of this study I know of: Matijašić 2020 (with notes, interesting analysis and friendly comments); Miano 2020 and Gershon 2021 (a highly critical review).

¹⁴ On composition of the work, see: Aujac 2002b: 71-75 (here about the first, “Platonian”, chapters”: pp. 72-73); cf. Fornaro 1997.

¹⁵ Discussion of Lysias’ λόγος ἐρωτικός in “Phaedrus” as a text written by a logographer (Plato. *Phd.* 257c), that is, a composer of speeches, whose success

speeches (the first – Phaedrus reading Lysias’s speech + two speeches by Socrates),¹⁶ criticizes the contemporary rhetoric mastery and presents a view on “the true τέχνη” (Plato. *Phd.* 271c-d). In “Phaedrus” Plato deliberates on the rules of the art of speech and strives to show that a true orator is a philosopher.¹⁷ But Dionysius condemns Plato for his “poetic embellishments”, which, in his opinion, are out of place in a prosaic work.¹⁸

Dionysius points out that Plato mocked many of his fellows,¹⁹ notable thinkers: Parmenides, Hippias, Protagoras, Prodicus, Gorgias, Polus, Theodorus, Thrasymachus²⁰ and other predeces-

sors and contemporaries (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.12; cf. *ibid.* 1.16 and 17). The critic of Halicarnassus reminds his addressee (as well as the “general public”) this historical and rhetorical treatise aims at that Plato proposed to expel from his ideal polity even Homer himself.²¹

ii. In the second chapter the author juxtaposes Plato with the outstanding orators. According to Dionysius, the Athenian philosopher modelled on Gorgias borrowing his “poetic devices”.²² Plato is given to verbosity, he seeks to use fine language, he is too obsessed with lofty and copious style, but he is not always successful there. The rhetorician from Halicarnassus clarifies his attitude:

“Let no one suppose that I say this in general condemnation of the ornate and uncommon style which Plato adopts I should be sorry to be so perverse as to conceive this opinion with respect to so great a man. On the contrary, I am well aware that often and on many subjects he has produced writings which are great and admirable and of the utmost power. What I desire to show is that he is apt to commit errors of this description in his more ornate passages, and that he sinks below his own level when he pursues what is grand and exceptional in expression, and is far superior when he employs the language which is plain and exact and seems to be natural but is really elaborated with unoffending and simple artifice” (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 2.7).²³

Before and after Dionysius, the European tradition treats Plato as a classic of the Attic parlance and eloquence.²⁴ But, according to a stern and unprejudiced critic from Halicarnassus, Gorgias’ rhetoric art was the true paragon for Plato. Yet, the word “unprejudiced”, in spite of Dionysius’s assurance and declarations of his allegiance to ἀλήθεια,

depends on the impression these speeches produce on the public (*ibid.* 258a-b), see a new paper by Jenny Bryan “The Role of Lysias’ Speech in Plato’s *Phaedrus*”: Bryan 2021: 1-21. On Plato’s criticism in “Phaedrus”, see also: Adkins 1996; Buccioni 2007; Werner 2010; Glukhov 2014: 269-285; Szlezák 2015 (on major notions of Plato’s criticism in “Phaedrus”); Galanin 2020: 96-100 (on rhetorical dimensions of the dialogues “Lysis” and “Phaedrus”); Hartmann 2020 (here about the specifics of philosophical rhetoric in the dialogue “Phaedrus”, “Gorgias”, and “Timaeus”). Specifically on the analysis of style of Plato’s “Phaedrus” in the works by Dionysius of Halicarnassus: Hunter 2012: 151-184. See the article by Laura Viidebaum “Dionysius and Lysias’ Charm”: Viidebaum 2019: 106-124, also: Yunis 2019: 90, 91 ff.; Schirren 2019: 186-187, 189-192 (on Lysias-ethographer), and Viidebaum 2021: 38-55.

¹⁶ See in Harvey Yunis: “For instance, in regard to Socrates’ first speech on *eros* in the *Phaedrus*, Dionysius famously mistakes Plato’s ironic, humorous imitation of grandiose style for sincere but bombastic effect (*Dem.* 7.3-7)” (Yunis 2019: 91).

¹⁷ On rhetoric and philosophy in Plato’s “Phaedrus” see, for example: Werner 2010, 21-46 (with the support of vast literature); here, in particular: “Plato’s account of the true τέχνη seems to place rhetoric quite close to philosophy itself, and in particular to philosophical dialectic” (p. 21); “This is because the true orator does not practise speech-making in any traditional sense; the true orator is a philosopher. In other words, the ideal rhetoric merges with philosophy: philosophical inquiry is the necessary precondition for the τέχνη, and philosophical discourse is the nearest approximation of that τέχνη” (p. 45). See also a new interesting work by M. Erler “Platon und seine Rhetorik”: Erler 2019: 315-338.

¹⁸ Cf. Sobolevsky 1960: 161-162, and here also a remark by a Russian philologist: “In this case Dionysius is wrong in his criticism of Plato: In ‘Phaedrus’ Socrates deliberately speaks in high style, so this poetic colouring is highly appropriate” (Sobolevsky 1960: 162, n. 16).

¹⁹ On laughter and irony in Plato, I will cite recent papers: Prokopenko 2016; Shcherbakov 2021 (both with a certain bibliography for the topic).

²⁰ These sophists and orators, Parmenides, Hippias, Protagoras and Gorgias, are the main characters

in the Plato’s works after whom these works received their titles. The four others are characters in various Plato’s dialogues.

²¹ Criticism of Homer and Hesiod, as well as of tragedy and comedy dramatists takes a large part on Books 2 and 3 of Plato’s “Republic”. While Dionysius mentions only a radical occasion – Plato’s denial of the Poet of Poets. Cf. Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.13-14.

²² Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 2.6; 2.8; 2.13: “His (Plato’s – A. S.) fault is that, in imitation of the school of Gorgias, he has introduced the pomp of poetical artifice into philosophical discourses, so that some of his productions are of the dithyrambic order”. See Fornaro 1997: 8 seg. (“Contro Platone”), 14-16.

²³ Roberts 1901: 99, 101.

²⁴ See, for example: Markov 2014; Semikolennykh 2015.

can be put in inverted commas here since, as will be shown at the end of the article, the critic could have his own personal interests in drawing this rhetorical comparison. Dionysius notes that Plato was under the influence of a well-known sophist orator, Gorgias, and his younger contemporary, though no less famous, historian, Thucydides²⁵ (“under the influence of his devices”, *Pomp.* 2.8); as to τὸ ὕψος τῆς λέξεως / τῶν λόγων, “Plato was inferior to Demosthenes”.²⁶

iii. The longest part of the treatise, the third one, where the author compares works by earlier Hellenic historians.²⁷ Here Dionysius introduces the names of several masters of historiography who worked in the classic era,²⁸ but the major heroes of the section are Herodotus and Thucydides.²⁹

²⁵ On various parallels and overlappings in the works of Thucydides and Plato there is vast literature (largely, of historical and political orientation); for example: Grene 1967; Barton 2006; Mara 2008; Samons 2010; Svetlov 2016; Mara 2017 (with bibliography for the topic).

²⁶ *Dion. Hal. Pomp.* 2.16: καὶ καθ’ ἐν τούτῳ Πλάτωνά φημι λείπεσθαι Δημοσθένους. On collating the styles of Plato and Demosthenes in the treatise by Dionysius of Halicarnassus “On Demosthenes”, see Reid 1997. The researcher notes that presenting Demosthenes’ speeches as a paragon of literary style, Dionysius chooses for comparison the “Apology of Socrates” as a vision of Plato’s style. Of recent works, see: Hunter 2012: 109-150 (Chapter 3 “Plato, Lysias and Isocrates”); Viidebaum 2019; Yunis 2019 (all publications with bibliographies); Viidebaum 2021, *passim* (esp. pp. 6-10, 176-213 [ch. 7 “Dionysius of Halicarnassus on Lysias, Rhetoric and Style”], 214-244 [ch. 8 “Isocrates and Philosophy in Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ Rhetorical Writings”]). The orator from Halicarnassus devotes to Demosthenes “an exalted hymn” (Sobolevsky 1960: 159); it conveys the rapture that he feels on hearing the speeches by the Athenian orator (*Dion. Hal. De Dem. dict.* 22).

²⁷ S.L. Jónsson defines the criteria set by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in “The Letters to Pompeius” to assess the style and content of works by ancient authors, where the latter compares the language of Herodotus and Thucydides (Jónsson 2021).

²⁸ Specifically on early Greek historians in Dionysius, see: Jacoby 1949: 86-87, 178-185; Toye 1995; Matijašić 2018. Also Fornara 1983: 17-20; Gabba 1991; Joyce 1999; Schultze 2000: 19 ff., 25-26 (+ here discussion in n. 53); Laird 2009; Osipova 2009; Osipova 2011a; Osipova 2013; Scanlon 2015: 146 ff.; de Jonge, Osipova 2018; Hunter 2019: 3-4; Schultze 2019: 177-178; Osipova 2019; Ivashkiv-Vashchuk 2020: 68-70; Osipova 2021. On Herodotus and Thucydides in the ancient rhetorical tradition, see the Ph.D. thesis: Kennedy 2018a.

²⁹ A critical analysis of the style of the Athenian historian is contained in the treatise “On Thucydides”

At almost all points examined by the orator of Halicarnassus, his countryman Herodotus excels his younger colleague.³⁰ The most important comparison point is ὑποθέσεις chosen in their historical works (*Dion. Hal. Pomp.* 3.3, 8-10; cf. *Id. Thuc.* 6, 10, 12), as Dionysius holds, Thucydides was unwise to choose the Peloponnesian war as the topic for his work³¹ because for the Greeks it was not a mark of pride.³² But the war that Herodotus wrote about should be regarded as glorious and victorious for the Athenians and the Spartans. So Herodotus’ choice is wiser than that of Thucydides (*Pomp.* 3.6). And the critic highlights the rivalry between the “father of history” and his contemporaries.³³

and “The Second Letter to Ammaeus”. See Grube 1950; Sobolevsky 1960: 162-164; Pritchett 1975; Fornaro 1997; Aujac 2002a. Selected literature: Weaire 2002; Weaire 2005; Lévy 2010; Rushkin 2014; Irwin 2015; Rushkin 2016; Hunter 2019. See in the well-known work by S. Bonner on Dionysius’ critical method: Bonner 1939: 59-97.

³⁰ “He (that is, Dionysius – A. S.) has set Herodotus and Thucydides at the top of his personal podium of historians, with a clear preference for the Halicarnassian” (Matijašić 2018: 81).

³¹ Cf. “Merely local history made little appeal to Dionysius. In *Ep. ad Pomp.* 3, he prefers the sort of subject treated by Herodotus, the story of a struggle that was epic in its character and afforded the fullest scope for the historian’s power, over that of Thucydides” (Pritchett 1975: 56-57, n. 35 *ad loc.* *Dion. Hal. Thuc.* 5.5).

³² See: “Thucydides, on the other hand, writes of a single war, and that neither glorious nor fortunate; one which, best of all, should not have happened, or (failing that) should have been ignored by posterity and consigned to silence and oblivion” (*Dion. Hal. Pomp.* 2.16; Roberts 1901: 99, 101). Here Dionysius of Halicarnassus shows his attitude not as a historian but as a philologist. He is concerned about the chosen topic, a proper description (arrangement of the material and combination of words), and about the past *per se*, it does not matter what the past events were like: horrible, shameful, fatal, self-defeating, sinister, disgraceful, disastrous, etc. See: Matijašić 2018: 73-78 (Herodotus vs. Thucydides), 97 ff., 123-128; Wiater 2019, 80 ff.

³³ The two significant figures referred to by Dionysius are usually related to Herodotus’ predecessors, “forefathers of history” (who are commonly, though mistakenly, called “logographers”). Charon of Lampsacus was the elder contemporary (he lived and worked in the first half of the 5th century); while Hellanicus of Mytilene on Lesbos was Herodotus’ contemporary (and probably his coeval, he was also born in the 480s BC), and he outlived the “father of history” by a couple of decades (died at the end of the 400s BC). On the very prolific and famous inhabitant of Mytilene, see: Niese 1888: 81-91; Perrin 1901; Jacoby 1912 (= Jacoby 1956:

“Very different was the course taken by Herodotus. Although his predecessors, Hellanicus and Charon, had previously issued [historical³⁴] works (τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ συγγραφέων γενομένων Ἑλληνικοῦ τε καὶ Χάρωνος) on the same subject, he was not deterred, but trusted his own ability to produce something better. And this in fact he has done” (*Pomp.* 3.7).³⁵

Herodotus includes in his *epic historiography* various digressions, as did the “first writer of history”, Homer, and here the “father of history” is referred to as a imitator of Homer.³⁶ According to

262-287); Pearson 1939; Jacoby 1949; Gärtner 1964a: 1004, 1005; Fornara 1968; Mosshammer 1973: 5-13, esp. p. 7-9 (about the *akme* of Hellanicus [456/5], mentioned by Apollodorus: FGrHist 244 F 7); Ambaglio 1980; Fowler 1996; Joyce 1999: 1-17; Möller 2007: 241-262; Sánchez Jiménez 2007; Lenfant 2009: 9-24; Strogetsky 2010: 105-107, 121-122; Ottone 2010a; Alganza Roldán 2012; Irwin 2013; Alganza Roldán 2015; Baurain-Rebillard 2016; Condilo 2017; Matijašić 2018: 182-183, 218 ff.; Polychronis 2018 (the most detailed today is the study of the “archives” of Hellanicus, with translations of the extant fragments and comments on them); Tufano 2019: 40-49, 59-67, 75-129, 444-452; Surikov 2021.

³⁴ Here, as in all other cases in “The Letter to Pompeius”, συγγραφεῖς it is the *historians* (see below, part 4).

³⁵ Roberts 1901: 107.

³⁶ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3.11: “Herodotus sought to diversify (ποικίλῃν) his work, following Homer in that”; here, it says literally that the historian was an *imitator* (ζηλωτής) of the great epic Poet; cf.: “en bon imitateur d’Homère” (Aujac 2002b: 90). See “Readers of Herodotus both ancient and moderns have found the imprint of Homeric epic on all levels of his text, from the occasional use of special poetic words, to literary tropes such as set speeches and dialogues, to overall range and purpose. Herodotus occasionally refers to epic characters and deeds; moreover, story patterns familiar from myths emerge from time to time in the *Histories*” (Boedeker 2002: 97). And also: “Dionysius of Halicarnassus extols Herodotus as the most ‘Homeric’ writer and argues that his prosaic style proved very close to poetry” (Borukhovich 1982: 242); “To Homer he undoubtedly owes much, in cast of thought as well in language” (Denniston, Pearson 1970: 509). Ancient authors compared the historical prose of Herodotus with the poetry of Homer; for example: Strabo. 1.3.18; Luc. *Hist. conscr.* 14; Quint. *Inst. Orat.* 10.1.73-74; Ps.-Long. *De subl.* 13.3 (μόνος Ἡρόδοτος Ὀμηρικώτατος ἐγένετο). The influence of the Homeric epos on Herodotus’ work has been frequently emphasized; see the collective monograph: Baragwanath, Bakker (eds.) 2012. On Herodotus-Ὀμηρικώτατος. I will refer to Christopher Pelling’s article (Pelling 2006) and the article by John Marincola (Marincola 2018, for the discussion, see in

Dionysius, all the digressions Herodotus resorts to are skilfully enwoven in the text of his work, thereby creating an impression that the military and historical work by Thucydides, in spite of its focus on one theme, is fragmented, while that of Herodotus seems integral. It is telling that the author of the treatise speaks about Herodotus’ “History” as a complete and harmonic work. He believes that the historian succeeded in completing his work on the great war waged by Hellenes and the barbarians: the finale speaks about Hellenic victories, the banishment of the Persians and the liberation of Hellas:³⁷

“...he (Herodotus – A. S.) does not break the continuity of the narrative. The general result is that, whereas Thucydides takes a single subject and divides one whole into many members, Herodotus has chosen a number of subjects, which are in no way alike, and *has produced one harmonious whole* (σύμφωνον ἐν σῶμα πεποιημέναι)” (*Pomp.* 3.14).³⁸

the review of the collection devoted to Herodotus: Sinitsyn, Surilov 2019: 185-187; Sinitsyn, Surikov 2020a, 359-360); Selected literature in Sinitsyn 2009: 58, n. 103; Sinitsyn 2019: 84, n. 2; and new works: Pelling 2019; Pelling 2020; Fragoulaki 2020a, XXI-XXII, XXIV-XV, XXXII, XXXVIII; Fragoulaki 2020b, 37-38 (here in note 2 provides selected bibliography), 39, 42, 52 f., 67 ff. *et al.*

³⁷ On the discussion of the issue of completion of Herodotus’ *Histories*, see in my articles: Sinitsyn 2013; Sinitsyn 2017a; Sinitsyn 2017b; Sinitsyn 2019 (with bibliography in every cited work). On the discussion about the issue of recent publications: Herington 1991; Boedeker 1988; Lateiner 1989: 45, 46-50, 119, 243, 244, 257; Moles 1996; Gasparov 1997; Pelling 1997: 59-63, Dewald 1997; Desmond 2004; Welser 2009: 367-372; Rosen 2009; Grethlein 2009; Hamel 2012: 286-290; Irwin 2013; Raaflaub 2016: 596-598; Irwin 2018; Sheehan 2018: 243-249 (notes to the “Guide to Herodotus” by Sean Sheehan, see: Sinitsyn, Surikov 2020b = Sinitsyn, Surikov 2021).

³⁸ Roberts 1901: 113. Talking about the theme of Herodotus’ work, formulated by him in the famous prooemium (Hdt. 1: “What Herodotus the Halicarnassian has learnt by inquiry is here set forth: in order that so the memory of the past may not be blotted out from among men by time, and that great and marvellous deeds done by Greeks and foreigners and especially the reason why they warred against each other may not lack renown”; Godley 1975, 3), the critic of Halicarnassus notes (*Pomp.* 3.4): “This introduction is *the beginning and the end of the ‘History’* [of Herodotus] (τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ προοίμιον καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος ἐστὶ τῆς ἱστορίας)”. See Pritchett 1975; Strogetsky 2010: 121-122, 130-133.

Dionysius is highly critical even of Thucydides' chronological method, which was a source of particular pride for the Athenian historian:³⁹

“Thucydides keeps close to the chronological order, Herodotus to the natural grouping of events. Thucydides is found to be obscure and hard to follow. As naturally many events occur in different places in the course of the same summer or winter, he leaves half-finished his account of one set of affairs and takes other events in hand. Naturally we are puzzled, and follow the narrative impatiently, as our attention is distracted” (*Pomp.* 3.12-13).⁴⁰

The historian of Halicarnassus in his search of truth rejects Thucydides' principle of historiography because events are divided into periods, time cycles, which makes him divert from one account to another, and yet another... only to return to the

interrupted story, and then he breaks the account again to switch on to something else.⁴¹ All this, according to Dionysius, creates an impression of fragmentation, which makes it difficult for readers to understand.⁴² Yet, these objections made by the philologist of Halicarnassus to Thucydides do not seem fairly convincing.

In content, as Dionysius holds, Thucydides is inferior to the “father of history”, but “in style, he is sometimes worse, sometimes better, sometimes equal to him” (*ibid.* 16). In the finale of chapter 3, the orator uses the “formula” to compare the two classic historians, the one modern scholars and students of the early historiography have frequently referred to when studying Dionysius:

“It may be said in general that *the poetical compositions* (as I should not shrink from calling them) of both (*αἱ ποιήσεις ἀμώτεροι*, i.e. Herodotus and Thucydides – *A. S.*) are beautiful (*καλαί*). The chief point of difference is that the beauty of Herodotus is

³⁹ Thucydides' work is structured on an “annalistic” pattern: the whole war is divided into periods – years, and every year is halved – into the summer season and the winter season (war campaigns). He is deemed to be the first to establish this principle to determine the accounts of historical events (selectively, on the structure of “The Histories” and Thucydides' system of periodization: Classen, Steup 1912: 54 ff., 257 ff., *ad loc.* 5.20.2 sq.; Sobolevsky 1955: 78-87; Gomme 1956a: 1, *ad loc.* Thuc. 2.1 + Appendix, p. 699-715, 716-721; Gomme 1956b: 685 ff., *ad loc.* 5.20.2-3; Meritt 1962; Pritchett 1964; Luschnat 1970; Rawlings 1981; Hunter 1977; Hornblower 1991: 38; Hornblower 1996: 490-493, *ad loc.* 5.20; Sonnabend 2004: 69 ff.; Dewald 2005; Irwin 2015). Of his special way the historian says (2.1): “The events of the war have been recorded in the order of their occurrence, summer by summer and winter by winter (*κατὰ θέρος καὶ χειμῶνα*)” (Smith 1956: 259). It is indicative that Thucydides frequently (Thuc. 2.1; 5.20.2 sq.; 5.26.1, 3) reiterates the importance of the principle of historiography *κατὰ θέρη καὶ χειμῶνας*, asserting its rightness. Thucydides deems his yearly-season method to be a novelty (cf. Hornblower 1991: 235: “Such an arrangement was a novelty (surely, of Thucydides – *A. S.*)...”; Rengakos 2006: 284: “a Thucydidean innovation”), with which he is determined to ensure the exact dating of the war events, that is why he is so particular in elucidating the importance of the chronological system he sets forth. And such method of marking is essential for the stern Athenian historian.

⁴⁰ Roberts 1901: 111, 113. On Dionysius' criticism of Thucydides' chronological method, see, for example: Wille 1968; Losev 1977: 108-110; Gabba 1991: 65 ff.; Toye 1995; Osipova 2010; Osipova 2011a; Wiater 2011: 132-154 (here § 3.2.1 – on the juxtaposition by the philologist of Halicarnassus of the principles established by the first historians); Osipova 2013; Irwin 2015, 125, 127 f. (+ n. 11), 170-171.

⁴¹ On the “technique of interweaving”, which Thucydides uses in “The History of the Peloponnesian war”, see, for example: Hornblower 1996: 256-257, 403; Dewald 2005; Rengakos 2006; Sinitsyn 2009: 56-58.

⁴² Cf. the same in his other work: “But Thucydides chose to follow a new path and one that had not been trodden by others, and divided his work by the events of summers and winters. The effect of this was different from what he had expected. The chronological division has not become clearer, but it is more difficult to follow...” (Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 9; trans. by Pritchett 1975: 5) Then with examples of “discontinuity of narration” from Book 3 of “The History of the Peloponnesian war” and the harsh condemnation as to the chronological novelty of Thucydides: “The whole book has thus been chopped up into small bits and has lost the continuity of the narrative. We lose our way, as is natural, and it is hard for us to follow the narrative, our mind being confused by the tearing asunder of the events, and being unable easily and exactly to remember the half-finished reports it has heard. The events narrated in an historical treatise must follow without interruption, especially when the events are many in number and hard to follow. It is plain, then, that the Thucydidean canon is not suited to history. For none of the later writers divided his history by summers and winters, but all of them followed the beaten paths that lead to clearness” (*Ibid.*; Pritchett 1975: 6) After that Dionysius adduces more examples of “digressions” made by the Athenian historian from the general theme and a faulty arrangement of the material (*Ibid.* 13-17; the discussion of these chapters of the treatise “On Thucydides” and remarks on the criticism of the Athenian historian by the philologist of Halicarnassus, see Oakley 2019: 128-130).

radiant (ἰλαρός), that of Thucydides aweinspiring (φοβερός)" (*Pomp.* 3.21).⁴³

Collating the prosaic texts with the poetic works (ποιήσεις), Dionysius expressly points out the significance of the aesthetic aspect of historical works. In his work on the history of Rome, he put an emphasis on the importance of "good themes" (καλαὶ ὑποθέσεις, *Ant. Rom.* 1.2.1) in historiography, time and again stressing the need for "good examples" (καλὰ παραδείγματα)⁴⁴ – both in the "Roman Antiquities" and rhetorical treatises.

iv. The following two parts are relatively short. In chapter 4 Herodotus is compared to Xenophon, whom Dionysius features as an imitator (ζηλωτής) of the "father of history" both "in content and style" (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 4.1). The Athenian historian is referred to as ἀνὴρ φιλοσοφός,⁴⁵ since he "chose noble and grand themes for his historical works (τὰς ὑποθέσεις τῶν ἱστοριῶν ἐξελέξατο καλὰς καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς)". Dionysius notes again that he chooses fortunate topics in his modelling upon Herodotus (4.2), though Xenophon's style is inferior to that of Herodotus. "Herodotus also boasted grandeur, beauty and splendour and what can be called πλάσμα ἱστορικόν,⁴⁶ which Xenophon failed to borrow [from him]..." (4.3)

⁴³ Roberts 1901: 117. As to the rhetoric and poetics in theoretical works in Aristotle and Theophrastus to Philodemus (and partly, Dionysius), see Beer 2019: 378-379. On the poetic influence and reminiscences in the works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, see the work de Jonge 2019 (mainly, *on the poetry of Horace). Casper de Jonge recognizes close similarity between a particular part of Horatio's *Ars poetica* and the discussion of the tasks set by the historian in Dionysius' "The Letter to Pompeius" (Jonge 2019: 245).

⁴⁴ See ch. 3 in the monograph by Friedrich Meins (Meins 2019), which discusses the value of beauty (κάλλος / "Schönheit"), which, according to Dionysius, a true historical work must reveal.

⁴⁵ On the historian Xenophon as *princeps philosophorum*, see: Matijašić 2018: 58-65.

⁴⁶ πλάσμα ἱστορικόν, as the orator characterizes Herodotus' style, W.R. Roberts renders into English as an exquisite phrase "historical vein": "and what is specifically called the "historical vein" (Roberts 1901: 119). A similar variant is found in Russian translation by O.V. Smyka: "историческая жилка" (Smyka 1978: 231). Here Dionysius speaks about Herodotus' mastery, his special manner of historical writing. One of the meanings of the word πλάσμα in the classical *LSJ* dictionary: "formed style in writing or speaking", and the authors adduced the phrase of our concern from chapter 4 of Dionysius' "The Letter to Pompeius" as an example from the ancient sources (*LSJ*: 1412, s.v. πλάσμα, III.1); cf. Roberts 1910: 317, s.v. πλάσμα (also with

v. Chapter 5 compares Philistus of Syracuse with Thucydides. According to Dionysius, Philistus had mastered his style under the influence of his famous Athenian predecessor.⁴⁷ One of the pithy reproaches Dionysius made to Thucydides and Philistus is that these historians chose local, petty topic, that they are interested only in local history, and narrowed down to a particular event ὑπόθεσις: with Thucydides it is the Peloponnesian war, with Philistus, it is the history of Sicily. Both do not produce momentous works of world history, which would describe international affairs and encompass a long period of time, as was the case with other historiographers.

Dionysius' judgement is harsh: Philistus' arrangement of material leaves much to be desired, and it is even more difficult to follow the sequence of events than it is in Thucydides' text. As the orator shows, in many points the historian from Syracuse is inferior to the Athenian scholar (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 5.2-3).⁴⁸ "Likewise Thucydides, he (Philistus – *A. S.*) does not divert from the topic proper and so he is very *monotonous* (ὁμοειδής) (5.2). And to demonstrate the monotony and scantiness of the language used by the Sicilian historiographer (who often uses "several identically structured periods" in a row, 5.4), Dionysius adduces a passage from his work "On Sicily" that lists ethnonyms and repeats sentences of similar structure (5.5).⁴⁹ Indeed, the cited fragment looks mo-

an example from *Pomp.* 4). See the English version by Stephen Usher in "Loeb": "and what is called by the special name of 'the historical cast of style'" (Usher 1985: 389); cf. the old Latin version: "suavem conformationem historicam, quemadmodum Herodotus, non habet (Xenophon – *A. S.*)" (Reiske 1777: 779); cf. also the French version by Germaine Aujac in the series "Budé": "et ce qu'on appelle proprement le mode d'écriture historique" (Aujac 2002b: 94) and in the same edition, clarification of this word in the Dionysius lexicon: "forme d'écriture, style (mot du vocabulaire stoïcien); fiction" (Aujac 2002b: 261, s.v. πλάσμα).

⁴⁷ On the historian Philistus as an imitator of Thucydides, see, for example: Fromentin 2010 ("Philistos de Syracuse, imitateur de Thucydide"); Matijašić 2018: 78-82, 146 f., 169-172 ("imitator of Thucydides").

⁴⁸ Cf. "At *Ad Pomp.* 5 Thucydides appears as a kind of benchmark for *taxis* that is difficult to follow, Philistus being 'worse than Thucydides' in this respect" (Irwin 2015: 128, n. 11).

⁴⁹ FGrHist 556 F 5. See Schindel 2004: 163-169; Tober 2017: 463-464. On discussion of the subject of Syracuse's *casus belli* and the neighbouring town of Camarina, and on their allies, see Di Stefano 1988-1989;

notonous, trite, oversimplified, dry and boring⁵⁰ – it is deprived of poetry αἰ ποιήσεις that Dionysius points to in Herodotus’ and Thucydides’ historical works (3.21; see the above-cited passage). He criticizes Philistus: he is an adulatory, menial, ignoble, his phrases (φράσις – “turns of speech”) are “horribly identical and formless (ὁμοειδῆς πᾶσα δεινῶς καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος⁵¹ ἔστι, 5.4)”. Philistus is petty and imperfect (μικρὸς ... καὶ ἀτελής) (5.6, with elucidations and examples), so the philologist admits that it abhors him (ταῦτα δὲ ἀηδὴ πάνυ ὄντα ἔμοι φαίνεται, 5.5).

Dionysius ends this part by putting a spoonful of honey into the barrel of tar: he points out to the harmony (εὐστομία), a sense of proportion and rhetoricalness typical of Philistus’ works. The essence of the latter “praise” (here, possibly, *cum grano salis*) is that, according to the philologist from Halicarnassus, Philistus’ style is more suitable for speeches meant for debates in assemblies, than that of Thucydides (πρὸς δὲ τὸν ἀληθινὸν ἀγῶνα ἐπιτηδειότερος Θουκυδίδου (5.6).⁵² Dionysius points out that Philistus’ turn of phrase is more serviceable in verbal contest, in legal pleadings which are to produce an impact on the audience at a particular moment; and this by all means runs counter Thucydides’ principles as expounded in methodological chapters of his “The History of the Peloponnesian War”.⁵³

Domínguez 1989: 547 sig.; Di Stefano 1993-1994; Di Vita 1999: 368, 369-370; Domínguez 2006: 289-290, 340; Sudano 2016.

⁵⁰ See again I. Matijašić’s remarks: Matijašić 2018: 79 ff. (also here: “Dionysius quotes a passage..., which does *actually appear rather dull*”).

⁵¹ In this sentence Dionysius contrasts the form of Thucydides’ narration (σχηματισμός and πλήρης σχημάτων) – to the formlessness (ἀσχημάτιστος) of Philistus’ expressions.

⁵² Discussion of this chapter of the treatise: Matijašić 2018: 79, 80-82. See also: Fromentin 2010: 103-118; Osipova 2019: 830, 832.

⁵³ Here are the proverbial lines from Thucydides: “Still, from the evidence that has been given, any one would not err who should hold the view that the state of affairs in antiquity was pretty nearly such as I have described it, not giving greater credence to the accounts, on the one hand, which the poets have put into song, adorning and amplifying their theme, and, on the other, which the chroniclers have composed with a view rather of pleasing the ear than of telling the truth, since their stories cannot be tested and most of them have from lapse of time won their way into the region of the fabulous so as to be incredible. He should regard the facts as having been made out with sufficient accuracy, on the basis

vi. The last, sixth, chapter of the treatise, is devoted to Theopompus of Chios.⁵⁴ Dionysius compares Xenophon to Herodotus, and Philistus to Thucydides, while Theopompus does not have a match,⁵⁵ he seems to stand aloof, and the orator extols this historiographer. “As a historian, he deserves praise... for his choice of themes... arrangement of material... thoroughness and industry... multifacetedness of composition (τὸ πολύμορφον τῆς γραφῆς)” (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 6.1-3).⁵⁶ Yet, it is not only about Theopompus’ meticulous gleaning of evidence and skilful arrangement of material, but about his philosophical comprehension of events and characters’ deeds.⁵⁷ So Dionysius shows him as a philosophizing historian, and “a psychologist” at that, unsurpassable by any creators in this field.

“The same may be said of the philosophical reflections scattered throughout his History, for he has many fine observations on justice, piety, and the rest of the virtues. There remains his crowning and most characteristic quality, one which is found developed with equal care and effect in no other writer, whether of the older or the younger generation. ... It is the gift of seeing and stating in each case not only what is obvious to the multitude, but of examining even the hidden motives of actions and

of the clearest indications, considering that they have to do with early times” (1.21.1; Smith 1956: 37); and *ibid.* 1.22.4.

⁵⁴ Selected literature on Theopompus and the characteristics of this historian by Dionysius: Laqueur 1934; Borukhovich 1959; Anderson 1963; Connor 1968; Lane Fox 1986; Pédech 1989; Shrimpton 1991; Gabba 1991: 73-79; Christ 1993; Flower 1994; Hornblower 1995; Sanders 1995; Bearzot 2005; Ottone 2010a; Ottone 2010b; Chavez-Reino 2010; Parmeggiani 2014: 1-4; Vattuone 2014: 7-34; Parmeggiani 2016; Hau 2016: 258-270, 271-277; Ottone 2017; Matijašić 2018: 4-5, 20-21, 51 ff., 59-61, 70-73, 78-86, 120-122, 165-172, 183 ff.

⁵⁵ Scholars have noted that divergences between Theopompus and Thucydides were deliberate: Connor 1968: 106, 119-120; Hornblower 1995: n. 47 (“Theopompus’ (surely deliberate) divergences from Thucydides”, with reference to W.R. Connor). On parallels in the works of Thucydides and Theopompus and the “search of relations” between the two historians, see: Chavez-Reino 2010.

⁵⁶ Dionysius considers the variety of the historical work in another place of this work (*Pomp.* 3.11-12), where Herodotus’ mastership is contrasted with that of Thucydides (and, as has been said before, not to the benefit of the latter). On the opposites of πολύμορφον – μονοειδές see: Oakley 2019: 138 ff. (+ n. 31).

⁵⁷ See Vattuone 2014: 16 ff.; Parmeggiani 2016: 400-402.

actors and the feelings of the soul (things not easily discerned by the crowd), and of laying bare all the mysteries of seeming virtue and undiscovered vice" (*Pomp.* 6.6-7).⁵⁸

Speaking about the ingenuity of Theopompus, Dionysius compares the historian to the "most brilliant" Athenian orators.⁵⁹ "As to the style, he is close to that of Isocrates"⁶⁰ (6.9), though "he differs from Isocrates in keenness and stringency" (*ibid.*), while "never being inferior to Demosthenes' power" (6.10). As was already noted, according to the 'scale' of Dionysius, Plato is below Demosthenes in grand style (2.8), Demosthenes emulates Thucydides (3.20), and Plato is influenced by Thucydides and Gorgias.

Having marked out many virtues of the historian of Chios, Dionysius criticizes him reservedly for inappropriate insertions (*παρεμβολαί*), which, as often as not, Theopompus makes out of place and out of time, moreover, many of them seem to him naïve, funny and childish (*πολὸν δὲ τὸ παιδιᾶδες ἐμφαίνουσαι*, 6.11).⁶¹ Examples of such insertions-'paidiodes' are found at the end of the book: Silenus in Macedonia and a sea monster attacking a ship; Theopompus is said to have had a lot of other nonsense stories of the same kind (*ibid.* 11).⁶² Although Dionysius admits that Theopompus' works contain many amazing and strange things (*θαυμαστὸν ἢ παράδοξον*, 6.4),⁶³ but the historian of Chios incorporates all these elements – peculiar anecdotes – not for the sake of entertainment but for practical use.

4. On *συγγραφεῖς* in *Pomp.* 6.11

Dionysius of Halicarnassus ends his treatise on the rhetorical mastery of Ancient Greek writers with pointing out the importance of his analysis and comparison:

οὗτοι παραληφθέντες οἱ *συγγραφεῖς* ἀρκέσουσι τοῖς ἀσκοῦσι τὸν πολιτικὸν λόγον ἀφορμὰς ἐπιτηδείους παραδειγμάτων παρασχεῖν εἰς ἅπασαν ἰδέαν (*Pomp.* 6.11).

"Thus, the study of the chosen *syngraphers* will constitute the necessary basis for those mastering political eloquence and give examples of all types of style".

Olga V. Smyka in her Russian version renders οἱ *συγγραφεῖς* in this passage as "writers"; it seems that here Dionysius means not only historiographers, but also philosophers and orators, that is, all those Greek authors examined in this treatise. But the main part of Dionysius' "The Letter to Pompeius" (Chapters 3-6, which constitute 2/3 of the work) is devoted to the comparison of historians. The orator of Halicarnassus uses the words *συγγραφή* (meaning "prosaic thesis; historical work, chronicle, history") and *συγγραφεύς* ("the author of a prosaic work, writer; chronicler; historian") to refer to the Greek historiographers.⁶⁴

In *Dion. Hal. Pomp.* these words occur 10 (+1) times: on 5 occasions in Chapter 3 devoted to Herodotus and Thucydides, the rest 5 (+1) are found in the last chapter (6) on Theopompus of Chios.⁶⁵ Here are excerpts from the text which contain words the base morpheme *συγγραφ-*:

3.7: "...but from *those syngraphers* before him (Herodotus – *A. S.*) Hellanicus and Charon (ἀλλὰ τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ *συγγραφέων* γενομένων Ἑλληνικοῦ

⁵⁸ Roberts 1901: 123, 125.

⁵⁹ Flower 1994: 52-57.

⁶⁰ On Isocrates and Hellenic historiography: Marincola 2014; Matijašić 2018: 82-83, 120-121, 128-135, 145-146, *et al.* (on the rhetorical works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus); Viidebaum 2021 (with vast bibliography).

⁶¹ Cf. Cic. *De leg.* 1.1.5.

⁶² Matijašić 2018: 81.

⁶³ As to the substantiation in *Dion. Hal. Pomp.* 6.4 of the significance of including into the historical work of episodes of *θαυμαστὸν* and *παράδοξον* and of the experience of historical narration of Dionysius of Halicarnassus himself in the "Roman Antiquities", I will refer to Stephen Oakley's notes: "In the *Ant. Rom.* Dionysius is in fact relatively restrained in his reporting of the marvelous, coupling these words or their cognates to describe events or people at *Ant. Rom.* 3.13.3, 21.1, 22.10, 47.4; 4.2.3; 5.8.6; 6.13.4" (Oakley 2019: 137, n. 15).

⁶⁴ See dictionaries: LSJ: 1661; Pape 1908: 962, 963; Dvoretzky 1958: 1518; Diggle et al. 2021: 1297.

⁶⁵ Germaine Aujac added an elucidation to the word *συγγραφεύς*: "historien (souvent couplé avec orateur... et philosophe); prosateur (opposé à poète...); auteur (de manuel didactique...)" (Aujac 2002b: 272-273, for the foregoing meanings of the word here are passages from Dionysius' works as they are rendered in "Les Belles Lettres" publication of the orator; and further comes an elucidation of the word *συγγραφή*: "oeuvre historique (de Théopompe)" (Aujac 2002b: 273, with references to two places in the sixth chapter of "The Letter to Pompeius"). See also in "The Three Literary Letters" by W.R. Roberts *ad vocem* *συγγραφεύς*: "*Historian.* Dionysius uses in the same sense ἀνὴρ ἱστορικός (*ad Pomp.* 110.4, 110.24) (with the indication of places in your book – *A. S.*) and λογογράφοι ('chronicles', or perhaps rather 'prose writers', *de Comp.* c. 16)" (Roberts 1901: 205).

τε καὶ Χάρωνος), published their works on the same topic”;⁶⁶

3.15: “As to the content, I will mention yet another quality that ... we wish to find in all historical works (ἐν ἀπάσαις ἱστορίαις), – it is the attitude of *the syngrapher* (τοῦ συγγραφέως διάθεσιν) to the events they recount”;⁶⁷

3.18a: “*The syngraphers* regarding this virtue are divided: for Thucydides..., while Herodotus... (Διήρηνται τὴν ἀρετὴν ταύτην οἱ συγγραφεῖς · Θουκυδίδης μὲν γὰρ..., Ἡρόδοτος δέ...);”

3.18b: “in these (αἱ ἀρεταί / virtues – *A. S.*) *the syngraphers* are equal (ἴσοι κὰν ταύταις οἱ συγγραφεῖς);”⁶⁸

3.21: “I may have said enough about *the syngraphers* (ἀπόκρη ταῦτα εἰρησθαι περὶ τούτων τῶν συγγραφέων), about whom much can be said, but this is on another occasion”;⁶⁹

6.2: κατὰ τὴν συγγραφὴν (Dionysius uses the word συγγραφὴ to denote the work by Theopompus, the historian of Chios, to whom the sixth chapter of the treatise is devoted);

6.3: διὰ τὴν συγγραφὴν;⁷⁰

6.6a: “Indeed, all these [qualities] of *the syngrapher* (that is, the foregoing virtues of the historian Theopompus – *A. S.*) deserve imitation (πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ζηλωτὰ τοῦ συγγραφέως);”

6.6b*: “philosophizing⁷¹ in the entire *syngraphe* on justice and devotion, and other virtues (φιλοσοφεῖ παρ’ ὅλην τὴν <συγγραφὴν περὶ>⁷²

δικαιοσύνης καὶ εὐσεβείας καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀρετῶν)...”;⁷³

6.7: παρ’ οὐδενὶ τῶν ἄλλων συγγραφέων... οὔτε τῶν πρεσβυτέρων οὔτε τῶν νεωτέρων. Under discussion is a special quality of Theopompus’ works, which is not so pronounced in works of “any other *syngraphers* ... either those older or younger” as it is in the works by the historian from Chios. In this case, as well as in the two passages of the previous, sixth, chapter, the matter in question is not about *writers in general*, but of the *authors of historical works*.

6.11: “*These syngraphers* (singled out for consideration in this treatise – *A. S.*) are ample for our needs (οὗτοι παραληφθέντες οἱ συγγραφεῖς ἀρκέσουσι)...”⁷⁴

It should be noted that the words συγγραφεύς and συγγραφὴ are missing from the middle part of the treatise, neither are they in Chapter 4 where the author juxtaposes Xenophon with Herodotus, nor in Chapter 5 which speaks about Philistus, who is compared with Thucydides.

In “The Letter to Pompeius”, Dionysius uses words with the root ἱστορ- more often than with the other “historiographical” meaning. Different forms of the word – ἱστορία, ἱστορικός, ἱστορέω, ἱστοριογράφος⁷⁵ – occur in this treatise 17 times.⁷⁶ Again, the use of words beginning with ἱστορ- occur only in the part that compares the works of Herodotus and Thucydides (Ch. 3), and in the last chapter of Theopompus (6).⁷⁷ In the chapters devoted to the historians Xenophon and Philistus, the words meaning “historiography” (practically) never happen. Only once is it said that Xenophon “chose noble and grand themes for his *historical works* (τὰς ὑποθέσεις τῶν ἱστοριῶν ἐξελέξατο καλὰς καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς)” (4.1).

⁶⁶ See Alganza Roldán 2015: 6, 17, 18 and page 23 has a table (though the reference to the passage is not accurate: Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3.6 – sic!).

⁶⁷ Here Dionysius compares the attitudes of Herodotus and Thucydides to what the historian recount in their works: Ἡ μὲν Ἡροδότου διάθεσιν... Ἡ δὲ Θουκυδίδου διάθεσιν... (*Pomp.* 3.15)

⁶⁸ Both passages from § 18 speak about the juxtaposition of the historians Herodotus and Thucydides.

⁶⁹ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3.21 also refers to Herodotus and Thucydides – the main characters of the third chapter of “The Letter to Pompeius”. This paragraph completes the first section on historiographers. Dionysius gave a detailed analysis of Thucydides’ works in the treatise “On Thucydides”, where he also used the comparison of Athenian author with Herodotus.

⁷⁰ Again, when characterizing the principles of Theopompus’ historiography, he speaks about his historical work.

⁷¹ Dionysius of Halicarnassus often uses the verb “philosophize” (φιλοσοφέω) to mean “be engaged in research”.

⁷² Here the word συγγραφὴ in *acc. sing.* And the preposition περὶ are another insertion; see, for example, the edition by “Bibliotheca Teubneriana” of rhetorical

works of Dionysius, prepared by Hermann Usener (Usener, Radermacher 1929: 246, *ad loc.*); in a different way in the comment to this passage in an old edition of another German philologist Friedrich Sylburg: παρ’ ὅλην τὴν ἱστορίαν (Sylburgius 1586: 132, n. 28, *ad loc.*); cf. G. Aujac and her references to H.C. Usener and F. Sylburg (Aujac 2002b: 98, n. *ad loc.*).

⁷³ The matter in question is additional virtues of the historical work by Theopompus.

⁷⁴ This sentence in translation by W.R. Roberts occurs in full at the beginning of the section.

⁷⁵ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3.1 has one reference to ἱστοριογράφοι (“historiographers”).

⁷⁶ Without the passage *Pomp.* 6.6, F. Sylburg referred to (see above, n. 72).

⁷⁷ Except in *Pomp.* 1.8 and twice in chapter 4

Dionysius regards Xenophon as an imitator of Herodotus (see above), but never does he call either Xenophon or Philistus a “syngrapher” (even if the latter can be classed among best-of-the-rest historians, which cannot be said of the former). Both the historiographers follow the pair of “fathers” of historical prose – Herodotus and Thucydides – and precede the *great syngrapher*, the title the orator of Halicarnassus conferred on Theopompus.

The paradox is proverbial: the historian Thucydides, who is regarded as the founder of ancient (and not only) historical science, in his historical work never uses either the word *ιστορία* or any cognate words. Contrary, as it happens, to Herodotus, in whose works “historiographic” the lexis frequently occurs. “A Lexicon to Herodotus” by J.E. Powell features 22 occasions when different forms of the word are used.⁷⁸ His younger contemporary, Thucydides, uses specifically the *syngraphic* (*xyngraphic*) vocabulary. In “The History of the Peloponnesian war” there are over 20 occasions of the words with the base morpheme *ξυγγραφ-*. I will refer to the “Lexicon Thucydideum”, compiled by Élie Ami *Bétant*; the Swiss philologist points out 16 occasions of the use of different forms of the verb *ξυγγράφειν* (“conscribere”), two passages with *ξυγγραφεύς* (“scribendis legibus”) and two more – with *ξυγγραφή* meaning “scriptura” and “historia”.⁷⁹ Thucydides in 1.97.2 speaks about the *history* of Attica written by Hellanicus (ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ ξυγγραφῇ Ἑλλάνικος). Herodotus “is second” to his younger fellow historian in the number of words drawn from the “syngraphic” vocabulary. The “father of history” uses the verb *συγγράφω* in 6 different forms in the meaning of “record in writing”, and *συγγραφή* occurs in “History” only once, in Hdt. 1.93.1.⁸⁰

The form of the verb *ξυγγράφω* occurs in the “introduction” to the work, literally, in the first line, where the historian speaks about himself and his work (Thuc. 1.1). Thucydides’ *ξυνέγραψε τὸν πόλεμον* can be rendered as “recorded the history of war in writing”. So the publishers of the work by the Athenian historian sometimes put the noun *ξυγγραφή* in the title: ΘΟΥΚΥΔΙΔΟΥ ΞΥΓΓΡΑΦΗ (“History” by Thucydides).

Thucydides, a syngrapher *par excellence*, was very popular among orators and historians of the

1st century BC. A lot of reviews written by Greek and Roman authors have survived, including that by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. I will refer to the work by Luciano Canfora, which contains ample material on Thucydides in Ancient Rome,⁸¹ with vast bibliography on the topic; as well as the article in the recent collection of papers on the reception of Thucydides.⁸²

Judgments on Thucydides can be found in Dionysius’ works “On Demosthenes” (1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 15, 39), “On Lysias” (2, 3, 4), “On Literary Composition” (4, 7, 10, 18, 22) and others.⁸³ Comments made by the orator on the mastery of the Athenian historian are often lofty. Nonetheless, Dionysius takes pride of place among Thucydides’ ancient critics. As H. Sonnabend noted, “An der Spitze der Skeptiker stand der griechische Rhetor und Historiker Dionysios von Halikarnassos...”⁸⁴ C.C. de Jonge in “Dionysius of Halicarnassus on Thucydides”⁸⁵ explains the inception of this “unduly harsh judgment” passed by Dionysius on Thucydides, considering the critical attitude of the scholar of Halicarnassus toward historiography (and literature on the whole) and the principle governing accounts of history, as well as making allowances for the specifics of the then Roman audience of the 1st century BC Dionysius aimed at. The treatise under review is full of critical remarks aimed at the Athenian historian, the third chapter of which is specifically devoted to the comparison of works by Herodotus and Thucydides, and, as already was noted, almost in all cases not to the benefit of the latter.

The orator sums up his deliberations in the sentence from the finale of “The Letter to Pompeius” (6.11) which is cited at the beginning of the paragraph. This sentence begins with οὗτοι, the masculine demonstrative pronoun in the plural, which relates to οἱ συγγραφεῖς and points to the writers

⁸¹ Canfora 2006.

⁸² Fromentin, Gotteland 2015, 14, 16-18, 19. On the prominence and authority of the Athenian historian, see Simon Hornblower: Hornblower 1995. See also: Wiater 2011; Iglesias-Zoido 2012; Kennedy 2018b, 608 ff., containing a survey of the Roman and Byzantine historiography on Thucydides (p. 608, n. 5 and 609, n. 6 – citing important literature).

⁸³ See the survey in the introduction by G. Aujac to volume 4 of “Opusculs rhétoriques” by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Aujac 2002a: 18-33).

⁸⁴ Sonnabend 2004: 83, with a reference to G. Wille’s work “Zu Stil und Methode des Thukydides” (Wille 1968); cf. Sonnabend 2004: 105.

⁸⁵ de Jonge 2017.

⁷⁸ Powell 1960: 174, s.v. *ιστορέω* (17) + *ibid.*, s.v. *ιστορή* (5), meaning “enquiry; results of enquiry”.

⁷⁹ Bétant 1847: 177-178.

⁸⁰ See Powell 1960: 340, s.v. *συγγραφή* (“recording”).

spoken of in the text, namely, to the *history*-writers whom Dionysius deemed exemplary authors. Here acolytes of Clio, first and foremost, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Theopompus, are referred to as “syngraphers”. Yet συγγραφεῖς also refers to the earlier historiographers – Hellenic and Charon, and Dionysius also uses this word to describe all Hellenic historians (6.7). The word συγγραφή in its main sense of “historical work” occurs three times in the entire corpus of Dionysius’ rhetoric writings, and all the three are found in “The Letter to Pompeius”, where it is used only to refer to the works of Theopompus of Chios (6.2, 3 and 6b).

O.V. Smyka in her translation of *The Letter to Pompeius* into Russian always (except 3.21) renders the words συγγραφεύς/συγγραφεῖς, συγγραφή as “author”, “writer” or “writers”, “works” though Dionysius means historical writings and history-writers on all occasions in the treatise. Here are several examples of translations of the passage *Pomp.* 6.11. Thus, in the old French edition of the rhetorical works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the beginning of the last sentence of “The Letter” goes like this: “Tels sont *les historiens...*”;⁸⁶ the English version of W.R. Roberts: “The study of these *historians...*”;⁸⁷ the French edition “*Les Belles Lettres*”: “*Les historiens* ici présentés...”;⁸⁸ another English translation published in the classical series Loeb Classical Library: “The comparison of these *historians...*”.⁸⁹ As we see, all the adduced versions the word συγγραφεῖς used by Dionysius are rendered as “historians” (“*les historiens*”, “*historians*”), that is, writers whose works Dionysius analyses in chapters 3-6 of his *Pomp.*

I will note that in “*Les Belles Lettres*” collection of Dionysius’ “*Opuscles rhétoriques*”, the editor G. Aujac always renders συγγραφεύς, συγγραφεῖς, συγγραφή in this treatise as “*historian(s)*”, “*history*”, “*historical*” (“*historien, historiens, histoire, historique*”). Aujac provides an explanation to the word συγγραφεύς: “*historien (souvent couplé avec orateur... et philosophe); prosateur (opposé à poète...); auteur (de manuel didactique...)*”.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Gros 1826: 135.

⁸⁷ Roberts 1901: 127.

⁸⁸ Aujac 2002b: 99.

⁸⁹ Usher 1985: 399.

⁹⁰ Aujac 2002b: 272-273. The adduced meanings of the word are such that appear in the passages from Dionysius’ works in “*Les Belles Lettres*” edition. And then comes an explanation of the word συγγραφή: “*oeuvre historique (de Théopompe)*” (Aujac 2002b: 273), with references to the two places in the sixth chapter of the treatise.

In the rhetorical works of Dionysius apart from “The Letter to Pompeius”, the word συγγραφεῖς is repeatedly attended by ποιηταί, and, as the context shows, in this combination syngraphers-historians are contrasted with poets.⁹¹ I will point to several places in which this pair occurs:

Thuc. 1.1: ποιητάς τε καὶ συγγραφεῖς;

De Dem. dict. 37.3: ποιητῶν τε καὶ συγγραφέων;

De comp. verb. 3.6: ποιητῶν μὲν..., συγγραφέων δὲ...;

– 9.1: ποιιοῦσι ποιηταί τε καὶ συγγραφεῖς;

– 15.13: οἱ χαριέστατοι ποιητῶν τε καὶ συγγραφέων;

– 22.10: ποιητῶν μὲν..., συγγραφέων δὲ...

Let me direct attention to two illustrative examples in the treatise “On Literary Composition”: 3.6 and 22.10. The first one singles out the poet and the syngrapher as exemplary writers, which “determines a clear understanding of the others [poets and syngraphers]”:

λαμβάνεσθω δὲ ποιητῶν μὲν Ὅμηρος, συγγραφέων δὲ Ἡρόδοτος.

“Let us choose Homer out of *poets*, and Herodotus out of *history-writers*”.

A similar construction of juxtaposing the words of interest to us occurs in Chapter 22, when Dionysius chooses τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων ἀνδρῶν to discuss the two others – a poet and a *syngrapher*:

ποιητῶν μὲν οὖν Πίνδαρος ἀρκέσει παραληφθεῖς, συγγραφέων δὲ Θουκυδίδης.

“Out of *poets*, Pindar will suffice, of *history-writers*, Thucydides”.

Thus, in both cases, the great poets of Antiquity, Homer and Pindar, are contrasted with the great Hellenic historians (συγγραφεῖς) of the 5th century BC, Herodotus and Thucydides.

Dionysius begins his work “On Thucydides” (1.1 and 3) with the same juxtaposition:

“My earlier publications ‘On imitation’ (περὶ τῆς μιμήσεως) ... have already discussed the *poets* and *syngraphers* (ποιητάς τε καὶ συγγραφεῖς) who are most prized. <...> While discussing *syngraphers* (τῶν συγγραφέων), I stated my views on Thucydides, though briefly and basically”.

In both cases (they are italicized in the given citation) I.P. Rushkin translates the word συγγραφεῖς used by the orator as “*historians*”, and what is more, the citation also has the syngrapher-historian,

⁹¹ Cf. Roberts 1901: 205: “συγγραφεύς is also used by Dionysius ... of a prose writers, as distinguished from ποιητής”.

Thucydides, whom Dionysius devoted this study to. See, however, in the new French translation of the "introduction": "les poètes et les *prosateurs*",⁹² also on the second occasion (*Thuc.* 1.3): "au chapitre des *prosateurs*";⁹³ compare, in *Lexique general* to the corpus of Dionysius' works compiled by G. Aujac:⁹⁴ "*prosateurs* (opposé à poète)", with reference to Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 1.1 and other passages where Dionysius uses this word in the meaning of "prose writer". The first sentence of the treatise "On Thucydides" S. Usher renders in English as: "*poets and prose writers*";⁹⁵ compare also in Latin as translated by I.I. Reiske,⁹⁶ and in English by W.K. Pritchett ("writers of poetry and prose").⁹⁷

In the treatise "On Literary Composition", poets are paired up with logographers, thereby clearly distinct. In contemporary ancient studies, the *locus communis* started to call the Pre-Herodotean Ionic history-writers (those who worked before or at the same time as Herodotus) "logographers". This notion has caught on and got established in our scholarship, but, in fairness, it is nothing but an historiographic construct stemming from the German classicists of the 19th century, which has nothing to do with the phenomenon it defines, that is, with the works of the "forefathers of history". Dion. Hal. *De comp. verb.* 16.1 says:

"Striving to visualize their object, poets and *prose-writers* (οἱ ποιηταὶ καὶ λογογράφοι) themselves coin appropriate and vivid words, as I already said, or they borrow the most representational words composed by previous writers <...>"

It is here that the word λογογράφοι occurs only once in the whole corpus of rhetoric works by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. This part of the treatise dwells on pleasant and eloquent speech, on melody and rhythm of poetic works, gives citations from "Iliad" and "Odyssey" by Homer, references to "Cratylus" by Plato and Theophrastus, the philosopher in the Peripatetic school (chapters 15-17), and then the orator proceeds to discuss the rhythm of the works of Thucydides, Plato, Demosthenes and other writers (ch. 18). In the excerpt cited, the word λογογράφοι does not mean particularly

the "forefathers of history" (whom Dionysius himself calls [ἀρχαῖοι] συγγραφεῖς or ιστορικοί), but all writers of prose (cf. in the English version of this place: "The poets and prose-writers...").⁹⁸

In places where Dionysius speaks about writers of prose and not poets, juxtaposing, for example, orators with syngraphers, the latter are supposed to be history-writers (in fact, in the last two cases, the context does not allow for asserting this expressly). Thus, in the work "On the ancient orators", Dionysius claims that he is determined to examine the works of "the most outstanding of the ancient *orators* and *syngraphers* (ἀξιολογώτατοι τῶν ἀρχαίων ῥητόρων τε καὶ συγγραφέων)" (*De ant. orat.* 4). Such distinction between prose-authors also occurs at the beginning of "The Second Letter to Ammaeus", where the scholar deliberates about Thucydides, and where syngraphers are separated from orators:

"I thought I had sufficiently indicated the characteristics of Thucydides when describing the most important and remarkable of those peculiarities which seemed to me to distinguish him from all previous *orators* and *historians*" (τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ ῥητόρων τε καὶ συγγραφέων)" (Dion. Hal. *Amm.* II. 1.1).⁹⁹

Considering the context, the word συγγραφεῖς means not "writers" in general, but particularly *history-writers*, who stand apart from orators; the latter are, surely, writers, but working in a different genre of literature. Cf., for example, the translation of this passage done by G. Aujac: "des orateurs et *des historiens*";¹⁰⁰ but differently by I.I. Reiske: "oratoribus et *scriptoribus*".¹⁰¹ In this "Letter to Ammaeus" Thucydides is frequently referred to as a "syngrapher".

Coming back from "The Second Letter to Ammaeus" to the main subject under discussion – "The Letter to Pompeius", I will note that in this treatise the words συγγραφεύς, ιστορικός and ιστοριογράφος are synonymous and interchangeable. It seems that Dionysius sometimes 'alternates' συγγραφεύς and ιστορικός to avoid repetitions, when he uses words having similar "historiographic" meanings one after another.¹⁰²

⁹² Aujac 2002a: 43.

⁹³ Aujac 2002a: 43.

⁹⁴ Aujac 2002b: 273, *ad loc.*

⁹⁵ Usher 1974: 463.

⁹⁶ Reiske 1777: 810.

⁹⁷ Pritchett 1975: 1. But see W.K. Pritchett's commentary on this passage: "The word συγγραφεύς, here used for a prose-writer, sometimes means 'historian' in Dionysius" (Pritchett 1975: 47, n. 4).

⁹⁸ Roberts 1910: 159. Cf. Roberts 1901: 205: συγγραφεύς – "historian" (see the quote above, n. 65).

⁹⁹ Roberts 1910: 131.

¹⁰⁰ Aujac 2002a: 129.

¹⁰¹ Reiske 1777: 788.

¹⁰² As, for example, is the case in *Pomp.* 3.15: ἐν ἀπάσαις ἱστορίαις ζητοῦμεν, τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ συγγραφέως διάθεσιν, κτλ.

5. A remark on the historiographical
“archaeology” in Dionysius’ treatise

At the beginning of *Pomp.* 3, setting about analysing the works of historians, the philologist from Halicarnassus mentions his three studies of imitation (περὶ μιμήσεως); the second one devoted to the analysis of “which poets, philosophers, *historiographers* and orators should be imitated (περὶ τοῦ τίνας ἀνδρας μιμεῖσθαι δεῖ ποιητάς τε καὶ φιλοσόφους, *ιστοριογράφους* <τε> καὶ ῥήτορας)”. Poets (ποιηταί) are treated en masse here, while authors of prose works are divided in accordance with literary genres: philosophic, historical and rhetorical.

The treatise does not dwell on poets, only twice does it mention Homer: also this epic poet appears in the context of Plato and Herodotus;¹⁰³ and the orator, in support of the authoritative assertion made by the ancient poet when he criticizes Thucydides for his superabundance which “drives the reader to exhaustion”, adduces the well-known quotation from Pindar (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3.12 = Pind. *Nem.* 7.52). In the second chapter, Dionysius criticizes Plato for “poetic frillings”, inappropriate in prose works, yet, in another place (*Pomp.* 3.21), he points out that he regards Herodotus’ and Thucydides’ works as “poetical” (ποιήσεις) (see the above quotation).

This theoretical work presents a detailed analysis of works of the best historians of the 5th and 4th centuries BC – “persons worthy of imitating (τοὺς ἀνδρας εἰς μίμησιν ἐπιτηδειοτάτους)”: Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Philistus and Theopompus (ibid.). According to the critic, they were the first and the last great historiographers of the past. Dionysius holds that the decline in literature started in the 4th century BC, after Alexander the Great. So the time of exemplary style is confined to the classic age when there were true masters.¹⁰⁴ The note of the time of Alexander, whose deeds had become the dividing line between epochs (and, in a broad sense, political and cultural senses, and in rhetoric and literature, in particular), occurs at the beginning of Dionysius’ treatise

¹⁰³ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1.13, where the Athenian historian is called a critic of Homer, and 3.11, where the “father of history” is called an imitator of the Poet, the “fore-historian”.

¹⁰⁴ Russell 2012, 460: “He (Dionysius of Halicarnassus – *A. S.*) doubtless thought of it as exemplifying his literary teaching, which was directed towards restoring Classical prose after what he saw as the aberrations of the Hellenistic period”.

“On Ancient Orators”.¹⁰⁵ In “The Letter to Pompeius”, the critic does not mention this divide, but even here he contemplates only classic writers.

In another treatise, Dionysius describes the history of Hellenic literature as stages in the regression of style: he distinguishes ancient writers (ἀρχαίοι), later (μεταγεστέροι) and the latest (χρόνω ὕστερον) men of letters (*De comp. verb.* 4.29-31). Here the scholar of Halicarnassus names still later historians who worked after the end of the 4th century BC, largely those of the 3rd–2nd centuries BC: Phylarchus, Duris, Polybius, Psaon, Demetrius of Callatium, Hieronymus, Antiochus, Heraclidus, Hegesias of Magnesia and “a host of others” (ἄλλους μυρίους).¹⁰⁶ But Dionysius’ sentence is harsh: it takes a great effort even to read the works by Hellenistic authors up to the end, and all of them are unworthy of imitating owing to their disgraceful style.¹⁰⁷

Thus, by analysing the historical works ἀνδρες ἐπιτηδειοτάτοι created three to four centuries before his time in “The Letters to Pompeius”, Dionysius seems to be making a peculiar experiment in theoretical “archaeology”.¹⁰⁸ He analyses not only historical works, but also a wide range of texts written by philosophers and orators, since the treatise discusses issues of style of the classic authors (predominantly, the Attic ones), and Chapters 1 and 2 of “The Letter to Pompeius” can be called “Platonian”.

¹⁰⁵ Dion. Hal. *De ant. orat.* 1. On periodization by Dionysius of classical early historiography: Alganza Roldán 2015: 7, 9, 18. See article by C.C. de Jonge “The Attic Muse and the Asian Harlot” (2014); cf. de Jonge, Hunter 2019: 5 (“The Attic Muse, which had been driven away by an Asian harlot after the death of Alexander the Great...”), 19, 20. See Sobolevsky 1960: 158-160 (here p. 158: “But ‘the Attic Muse’ went silent, as Dionysius says, after the death of Alexander the Macedonian (323 BC), to be more exact, with the deaths of Demosthenes and Hyperides (322 BC), that is, 300 years before Dionysius”); Osipova 2009: 462 ff.; Yunis 2019: 87: “...into an epochal narrative of original glory (classical Athens), descent into depravity and chaos (Hellenistic Asianism following Alexander’s death)...” On the discussion on Classicism, Atticism, and Asianism: Gelzer 1979; additionally: Hidber 1996; Reid 1996; de Jonge 2008; Wiater 2011; Wiater 2018; de Jonge, Hunter 2019: 18-21 (with literature review); Yunis 2019; de Jonge 2019.

¹⁰⁶ Dion. Hal. *De comp. verb.* 4.30. Dionysius here is hyperbolizing: “*A day would not be enough* for me to name all the historians (later historians who are inferior to the predecessors ἀρχαίοι – *A. S.*)”.

¹⁰⁷ Osipova 2009: 462; Matijašić 2018: 73, 85 f., 115, 214 f., n. 124; Osipova 2019: 829, 830 (and n. 3).

¹⁰⁸ Sobolevsky 1960: 159 (+ n. 12), 160.

Dionysius is convinced that – like the work, like its author – every historiographer exposes himself as a sincere, fair, moral and reasonable man or, the opposite, thereby revealing his different qualities. Every historical work is bound to reveal the personal predilections of its author.¹⁰⁹ And the rhetorical and philological “archeology” by Dionysius of Halicarnassus seems to show not only his scholarly interest in analysis of the writers of the past, but a focus on the present, both in literary and cultural aspects.

6. The protracted literary *agon*

This work does not touch upon problems of the ingenuity of Dionysius’ assertions, the principles of his literary criticism, the dichotomy of rhetoric and historiography in the works of the scholar of Halicarnassus,¹¹⁰ the problems of classicism in literature, nor literary theory during the age of Augustus.¹¹¹ Having briefly delineating the structure of “The Letter to Pompeius” and the sequence of comparisons made by the author who has surpassed all the ancient historians before him, proceeding from the text of this work, I will focus on one point.

Thus, in the treatise under study, Dionysius not only discusses the various styles of the writers of the 5th and 4th centuries BC, but he also juxtaposes and assesses them, distinguishing their strong and weak sides. Plato, in the critic’s opinion, is inferior to Demosthenes in his loftiness of style (2.8), Demosthenes imitates Thucydides (3.20), Plato is under the influence of Gorgias and Thucydides, while Thucydides, according to the critic, is inferior to Herodotus in his mastery.¹¹² As for the philosophizing historian, Xenophon, he simply is not up to Thucydides and Herodotus.¹¹³ According to

the grading scheme devised by Dionysius (who was surely aware of the full texts by the early-Ionic syngraphers, the “forefathers of history”, and the critic could compare the texts), the works by the “father of history” excel the works by Charon and Hellanicus, while Theopompus’ art of style is on par with that of Demosthenes and is superior to that of Isocrates – the two “most brilliant” orators of the past.

It seems as if by engaging with a whole gallery of personalities, Dionysius presents an *agon* of writers, their styles, the right choices of topics, the extent of tenseness of narration, obligatory digressions from the main topic, the skill of weaving these excursions into the story-line, *etc.* The author does not use the word *agon*, but the verbal form containing the root ἀγῶν- occurs when related to the historical work by Thucydides (in the cited passage 5.6. above). But the text is abundant in comparative forms when it comes to the examination of writers. Analysis of the mastery of the writers selected in the treatise is abundant in comparatives, as well as the word σύγκρισις (“comparison”) or the corresponding word συγκρίνω (see: 1.8, 9, 11, 17). Dionysius keeps speaking of the need for examination by comparing poetic, historical and philosophical works, laws, teachings, state systems and the rest, and in *Pomp.* 1.9 he states that “the best way of examination is that of comparison (ὅτι κράτιστος ἐλέγχου τρόπος ὁ κατὰ σύγκρισιν γιγνόμενος)”.

In another critical work that is devoted specifically to Thucydides, Dionysius, when characterizing the general traits of early syngraphers, “all the historians before Thucydides (πάντες οἱ πρὸ Θεουκιδίδου γενόμενοι συγγραφεῖς, *Thuc.* 23.1)”, notes that they all lose to Herodotus,¹¹⁴ whose work is a pinnacle of the Hellenic historiography, but which, however, is devoid of the *agonality* (ἔξω τῶν ἐναγωνίων, *ibid.* 23. 8).¹¹⁵

One of the substantial reproaches Dionysius heaps on Thucydides and Philistus is that these historians choose specific, local, petty topics, they are

¹⁰⁹ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3.15; and cf. Id. *Thuc.* 8.2.

¹¹⁰ For discussion of rhetoric and historiography in Antiquity (beyond Dionysius of Halicarnassus), see the interesting work by S. Schorn: Schorn 2019, 627-654. In relation to Dionysius’ views’: Meins 2019; Viidebaum 2021.

¹¹¹ See Wiater 2011; Hunter 2019; Wiater 2019.

¹¹² Grube 1950; Grube 1965, 209-211.

¹¹³ Clemence Schultze notes: “As regards the depiction (μίμησις) of emotion and of character, Dionysius awards Thucydides the palm for the former, Herodotus for the latter (*Pomp.* 3.18). Xenophon falls short here (*Pomp.* 4.4), while Theopompus’ understanding of ‘the emotions of the soul’ is outstanding (*Pomp.* 6.7-8)” (Schultze 2019, 178).

¹¹⁴ In a similar vein, in the same work: Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 5.4-5.

¹¹⁵ See comments on this passage: Pritchett 1975, 82-83, n. 36 *ad loc.* Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 23, with a reference to the article on Herodotus in *OCD*² (§ 11), whose authors compare the style of the “father of history” to the effortless ease of the Austrian genius, Mozart: “Herodotus has suffered the fate which befell Mozart. His charm, wit, and effortless ease have diverted attention from the note of profound sadness and pity sounded not seldom in his History” (Denniston, Pearson 1970, 509).

interested in local history, narrowed down to a particular story (as, for example, the Peloponnesian War for Thucydides, who participated in it and was an eye-witness); they do not create ambitious works on “world” history, which would have described international affairs and encompassed a long period of time, the way Herodotus and other historiographers did. But Herodotus includes various digressions in his epic narration, as does Homer (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3.11).

The grammarian of Halicarnassus presents in his work not the stringent and spiteful “Zoilus’ criticism”, which had been formed by the Greek and Roman scholars by the 1st century BC, but he advocates for an objective analysis and agonistics based on the conditions that are equal for every orators of the past and the present. And Zoilus, the infamous denigrator of Homer and Plato, in Dionysius’ view, becomes a competitor of the endless literary contention. Dionysius is not a “Platonomastix” or “Thucydidomastix”, but by pointing out the weak points (in his understanding) in the works of his great predecessors, he positions himself as a researcher – attentive, stern, and unprejudiced. And his approach is utterly critical. Collating ἀγαθοὺς ἀγαθοῖς and τηλικούτοι ἄνδρες, the grammarian participates in this *agon*.

Dionysius’ work is not a philological “archaeology”, in the sense of studying antiquities (be they the worthiest, classic) for their own sake, since the author always aims at topical polemics. The “Roman Antiquities” by Dionysius of Halicarnassus had become the actual embodiment of the contest with the worthiest Greek historians.

Presenting a gallery of classical authors, the orator from Halicarnassus seems to compete with the great creators of the past. He portrays the adeptness in verbal artistry as a peculiar protracted *agon* threading across ages and epochs, a contest of historians, philosophers and orators. Dionysius narrows the circle of best writers and steps into it himself. An agonist of a critic, he states that in scholarly rhetoric “the truth is dearer”, and puts forward the criteria to be applied to judge his ancient counterparts. Dionysius himself must have realized that he would be judged by the same (his own) criteria.

Abbreviations

AAL *Acta Archaeologica Lodziensia*, Łódź.
 AJPh *American Journal of Philology*, Baltimore, MD.

AMA *Antichnyi mir i arkheologija (Ancient World and Archaeology)*, Saratov.
 BMCR *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*.
 ClAnt *Classical Antiquity*, Berkeley, CA.
 CPh *Classical Philology*.
 CQ *Classical Quarterly*, Oxford.
 CR *Classical Review*.
 FgrHist *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. F. Jacoby (hrsg.). Berlin; Leiden, 1923-1958.
 GR *Greece & Rome*.
 GRBS *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, Durham.
 ICS *Illinois classical Studies*.
 IJaKF *Indoeuropeiskoe jazykoznanie i klassicheskaia filologija. Materiaky chtenij, posvjashchennykh pamjati professor I.M. Tronskogo (Indo-European Linguistics and Classical Philology. Proceedings of the Conference in Memory of Professor Joseph M. Tronsky)*. St. Petersburg.
 JHS *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, London.
 JRS *Journal of Roman Studies*, London.
 KP *Der kleine Pauly: Lexikon der Antike*. K. Ziegler, W. Sontheimer (hrsg.). Stuttgart. Bd. 1-5.
 LSJ *Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. With Revised Supplement Compiled by H.G. Liddell and R. Scott; Revised and augmented throughout by Sir H.S. Jones; with the Assistance of R. McKenzie and with the Cooperation of Many Scholars. New Supplement. Oxford.
 NP *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*. H. Cancik, H. Schneider (hrsg.). Stuttgart; Weimar. Bd. 1-19.
 OCD² *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 2nd ed. N.G.L. Hammond, H.H. Scullard (eds.). Oxford, 1970.
 OCD³ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd ed. S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth (eds.). Oxford, 1996.
 OCD⁴ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 4th ed. S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth, and E. Eidinow (eds.). Oxford, 2012.
 PII *Platonovskie issledovanija (Platonic Investigations)*. Moscow; St. Petersburg.
 RE *Pauly's Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Neue Bearbeitung begonnen von G. Wissowa. W. Kroll u.a. (hrsg.). Stuttgart; München, 1893-1980.

- TAPhA *Transactions of the American Philological Association.*
- TPAPhA *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association.*
- VDI *Vestnik drevnei istorii (Journal of Ancient History)*, Moscow.
- Literature
Sources and Commentaries
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