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Longinus *On Sublimity*

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Abstract: The traditional attribution of *On Sublimity* to the third-century critic Cassius Longinus has been rejected by most scholars since the early nineteenth century. The arguments against a third-century date are examined and shown to be unfounded. It is argued that the interest in sublimity and a number of aspects of the treatise's vocabulary show distinctive points of contact with the evidence for Cassius Longinus, and with authors influenced by him. There is therefore a balance of probability in favour of the traditional attribution.

1. Introduction

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century the treatise *On Sublimity* was universally attributed to the third-century critic, rhetorician and philosopher Cassius Longinus.¹ Weiske's edition, first issued in 1809, marked a turning-point in the trend of scholarly opinion, and Longinus' claim to authorship is now generally rejected, often summarily.² A variety of alternative attributions have been canvassed; most commonly the work is assigned to an anonymous author of the first century AD.³ But a minority of scholars have resisted the consensus and defended Longinus' claim to authorship.⁴ This paper will argue that they were right to do so.

To avoid ambiguity, I shall follow Russell in using the symbol 'L' as a non-committal way of designating the author of *On Sublimity*; by 'Longinus' I shall always mean Cassius Longinus. So the question before us is whether L is Longinus. I begin by explaining why manuscript evidence (§2) and stylistic comparison with the fragments of Longinus (§3) fail to resolve the question. I then try to find a place for the composition of the treatise within Longinus' career

¹ *RE* Longinos (= Aulitzky 1927); *PLRE* I Longinus (2); *FGrH* 1091. Brisson and Patillon 1994, 1998, provide a detailed study and a collection of the fragments (cited here in the form F1); but I would dissent from their rejection of the essay on memory (see n.10 below) and the testimonium to the chronographic work (see n.46). On Longinus' Homeric scholarship (F22-24, F27) see now Dyck 1989, 7f.

[**Additional note** (August 2007): The standard edition of Longinus' fragments is now M. Patillon and L. Brisson (ed.), *Longin. Fragments. Art Rhétorique. Rufus. Art Rhétorique* (Paris 2001); my review (*Classical Review* 52 (2002), 276f.) draws attention to some additional material. There is also an extensive study of the fragments by I. Männlein-Robert, *Longin Philologe und Philosoph. Eine Interpretation der Erhaltenen Zeugnisse* (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 143, Munich-Leipzig 2001), which I reviewed in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2002.03.18. Neither Patillon and Brisson nor Männlein-Robert address the authorship of *On Sublimity* in any depth. I have set the case for Longinus' authorship in a larger third-century context in *Menader: a rhetor in context* (Oxford 2004), 52-89]

² E.g. Brisson and Patillon 1998, 3104f., devoting four lines of their 172-page study to this question.

³ E.g. Kennedy 1972, 369-72, arguing for an Augustan or early Tiberian date (but see 640 for a reservation; and Kennedy would now opt for a date in the second century: 1997, 34).

⁴ Notably Marx 1898; Luck 1967; Williams 1978, 17-25. Grube 1965, 340-2 is open-minded.

(§4). This leads to a consideration of the final chapter, widely regarded as inconsistent with a third-century date; I shall argue that there is no inconsistency (§5). If so, the way lies open to a reassessment of the case in favour of Longinus' claim. L's critical thought and vocabulary prove (§6) to be connected in numerous ways with the fragments of Longinus, and with the works of neoplatonist authors who wrote under his influence.⁵ Some residual issues are addressed in an Appendix.

2. Manuscript evidence

In P (= Par. 2036, the only primary witness) the treatise carries the superscription 'Dionysius Longinus'. A name of the form 'Cassius Dionysius Longinus' (or 'Cassius Longinus Dionysius') is unobjectionable in itself. Greeks with Roman citizenship commonly used their Greek personal name as the third of the *tria nomina*, but there are many examples of a Greek personal name combined with a Latin cognomen; for example, the second-century sophist Dionysius of Miletus was named T. Claudius Flavianus Dionysius.⁶ But Longinus is nowhere else referred to as 'Dionysius Longinus', and the fact that he and Dionysius of Halicarnassus were the two most famous literary critics of antiquity suggests that the superscription may conflate alternative attributions. The disjunction 'Dionysius *or* Longinus' is in fact preserved (or restored) in the list of contents in P. The treatise is certainly not by Dionysius; it is likely that this conjecture was prompted by the reference in 39.1 to the author's two books *On Composition*.⁷ It is possible, therefore, that the attribution to Dionysius arose as a conjectural alternative to an original and authentic attribution to Longinus. But that is not certain: at least one of the alternative attributions must be a false conjecture, but both may be.

The manuscript evidence could not, in any event, be decisive. Even if P were unequivocal in attributing the work to Longinus, that attribution might be conjectural and mistaken. There are many examples of rhetorical texts that have at some point been transmitted without an author's name, and which have acquired incorrect attributions through conjecture.⁸ The current consensus holds that there is compelling internal evidence against a third-century date for *On Sublimity*; if so, we should have to reject the attribution to Longinus irrespective of manuscript evidence in his favour. Conversely, the attribution might be conjectural and yet correct: conjectural attributions are sometimes right, as a pertinent anecdote will show.

⁵ The potential importance of the later Platonists for the problem was stressed by Luck 1967, 99, 112.

⁶ *IEph.* 426: see Jones 1980, 373f.; examples could be added indefinitely.

⁷ A scholion *ad loc.* notes that Dionysius had written on this topic (περὶ συνθέσεως ἔγραψε Διονύσιος). In the same way, references in the pseudo-Dionysian *Art of Rhetoric* to the author's *On Imitation* (364.24, 383.22 Usener-Radermacher) prompted the attribution to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (see the scholion to 359.2, and p. xxii of the editors' introduction).

⁸ To the examples collected in Heath 1998a, 89f. (the paper goes on to question the authorship of the treatise traditionally attributed to Apsines) one might add Quint. 3.5.14, on texts attributed to Hermagoras.

3. Stylistic arguments

In 1765 David Ruhnken, reading the rhetorical treatise attributed to Apsines in what was then the only printed edition (the Aldine *Rhetores Graeci*), realised that a fragment of a work by a different hand had intruded into it, presumably as a result of an incorrectly bound exemplar at an earlier stage of the text's transmission. This diagnosis was subsequently confirmed by the discovery of a manuscript of the treatise (Par. 1874) from which the intrusive fragment is absent. Ruhnken identified the author of the fragment as Longinus. According to his own account of the discovery this attribution was first suggested by similarities in style to the treatise *On Sublimity*: 'J'y reconnus non seulement la marche de Longin, mais plusieurs expressions qui lui sont particulières.'⁹ Confirmation of the hypothesis came when Ruhnken recognised in the fragment a passage quoted under Longinus' name in the scholia to Hermogenes; further confirmation was provided by the discovery of an epitome of the same work, again under Longinus' name.¹⁰

Ruhnken's judgement that there were stylistic resemblances between the fragment of Longinus' *Art of Rhetoric* and the treatise *On Sublimity* has been echoed by scholars who accept Longinus' authorship of the treatise;¹¹ sceptics have rejected it.¹² Partisans on either side of the debate might be tempted to suppose that this divergence of opinion reflects a lack of objectivity on the other;¹³ but in fact the uncertainty is more deeply rooted. It should, in any case, be clear that this problem needs to be approached with caution. To compare an instance in which common authorship does not seem open to doubt, the two authentic works of Hermogenes illustrates how markedly treatises by a single author can differ in style and manner of presentation. In the present case, we have good reason to expect such a difference: a technical handbook of modest ambitions is unlikely to deploy the same stylistic resources as a more elaborate formal composition.¹⁴ It has often been observed that in many passages L adapts his style to the subject-matter in detail, echoing stylistic features discussed in the

⁹ The discovery was announced in Ruhnken 1765, reprinted in Wyttenbach 1821, 793-5; Wyttenbach's own narrative (1821, 640f.) is in turn reproduced by Walz (*RG* 9.xxiii n.19).

¹⁰ Fragment: F15b = 179-97 Spengel-Hammer (194.9-18 ~ Longinus *ap.* *RG* 5.451.12-452.8; unattributed in John of Sicily, *RG* 6.119.21-7). Epitome: F15a = 208-12 Spengel-Hammer, re-edited in Gautier 1977, who shows that the epitomator was Michael Psellus. The intrusive material in 'Apsines' also includes: (i) an essay on memory (197-206 Spengel-Hammer), the attribution of which to Longinus is contested but in my view probable (on this point I agree with Aulitzky 1927, 1411-3 against Brisson and Patillon 1998, 3042); (ii) some notes on the heads of purpose (τελικὰ κεφάλαια) which there is no reason to associate with Longinus (206-7 Spengel-Hammer).

¹¹ Marx 1898, 195; Luck 1967, 109 ('Nicht nur sachlich, auch stilistisch ist eine erstaunliche Verwandtschaft zu beobachten, die allerdings nicht immer leicht zu beschreiben ist').

¹² Kaibel 1899, 116f.; according to Russell 1964, xxiv-xxv, Longinus' fragments 'wholly lack the abundant metaphor and pregnant sententiousness' of *On Sublimity*; cf. p. xl, on L's 'lavish metaphor and immense richness... a marked fondness for *graves sententiae* of a Tacitean ring'.

¹³ A lack of objectivity on Kaibel's part has indeed been recognised by some who accept his conclusion (Aulitzky 1927, 1406; Walsdorff 1927, 95 n.1) as well as by opponents (Luck 1967, 98).

¹⁴ Innes 1994, 48 comments on L's tendency to treat technical terminology allusively, and on the apology for overly technical treatment in 29.2.

text;¹⁵ and it seems clear that he has done the same thing on a larger scale in the treatise as a whole, adopting a specially heightened style appropriate to his subject.¹⁶ It would be wrong, therefore, to assume that the style of *On Sublimity* is typical of its author's manner. Indeed, the treatise itself does not sustain the same stylistic level throughout: consider chapters 40-43, 'a stretch of writing... in which a certain haste and disorder are apparent.'¹⁷

Longinus himself was demonstrably a versatile stylist. The fragment of the *Art of Rhetoric* (F15b = 179-97 Spengel-Hammer) is not identical in style to the epistolary preface to his treatise *On the End* (F2 = Porphyry *Life of Plotinus* 20-21), the fragment of a philosophical critique of the Stoic doctrine of the soul (F8 = Eusebius *Praep. Evang.* 15.21), the prolegomena to the commentary on Hephaestion's treatise on metre (F14a = 81-87 Consbruch), or the lecture on memory (197-206 Spengel-Hammer). If we had his *Odaenathus* (F6e = Libanius *Ep.* 1078), presumably an epideictic speech in honour of the Palmyrene king to whose court he moved at some time in the 260s (see §4 below), he would no doubt show us yet another stylistic face. This variety of styles is not surprising: the fragments differ from each other (and from *On Sublimity*) in genre, and Longinus' rhetorical training, as well as his critical expertise in questions of style, would have fostered stylistic versatility.¹⁸ We have, then, a text written in a style that is unlikely to be typical of its author, and an author who could command a wide range of styles and whose works are represented by relatively small samples of many different kinds of writing—a trivial fraction of his total output. There is surely no way to determine, either positively or negatively, whether this author's stylistic range could have stretched as far as the style of this text.

It is possible that more specific inconsistencies in linguistic practice would enable us to put Longinus' authorship in doubt. For example, Russell acutely observes that with πάντες Longinus repeatedly uses ἐφεξῆς, while L uses ἐξῆς, and comments: 'this is the sort of detail which makes good evidence for a difference of author.'¹⁹ But further investigation suggests otherwise. Aelius Aristides' practice is strikingly erratic: *On the Four* uses only πάντες ἐφεξῆς (nine times), while *Against Plato* and the *Sacred Discourses* use only πάντες ἐξῆς (twice each); of his other works some use one form, some the other, while the *Panathenaicus* uses both.²⁰ I cannot fathom the reasons for this variation, but the fact is beyond doubt; so this usage cannot be made an index of authorship.

¹⁵ Some examples, and further references, in Innes 1994, 48.

¹⁶ Boileau: 'En traitant des beautez de l'Elocution, il a employé toutes les finesses de l'Elocution. Souvent il fait la figure qu'il enseigne; et en parlant du Sublime, il est lui-mesme tres-sublime' (preface to *Traité du Sublime* (1674), in Boileau 1966, 333). Cf. Pope *Essay on Criticism* 679f., on 'bold Longinus', 'whose own Example strengthens all his Laws, / and is himself that great Sublime he draws.' The features of style which Russell picks out as characteristic of L (n.12 above) are precisely those which an author aiming for this effect might cultivate.

¹⁷ Russell 1964, 185.

¹⁸ On stylistic versatility in the second sophistic see Pernot 1993, 1.336-8.

¹⁹ Russell 1964, xxv n.1. Note that in this paragraph I am using 'πάντες' as a shorthand for 'πάντες and cognates'.

²⁰ Consider again Hermogenes, who uses only πάντες ἐξῆς (twice) in *On Issues*, and only πάντες ἐφεξῆς (once) in *On Types of Style*.

Quantifiable aspects of style, such as hiatus, rhythm, sentence-length and structure, are also unlikely to prove helpful: the sample-size is too small, and we know that these features were deliberately varied to achieve different stylistic effects.²¹

I do not believe, therefore, that in this instance the question of authorship can be resolved on stylistic grounds. That means, of course, that Ruhnken's conjecture about the authorship of the fragment on rhetoric could not safely have been accepted without other evidence to confirm it. But other evidence was forthcoming. So Ruhnken's sense of style has at least this to be said for it: it produced a hypothesis capable of independent confirmation, that was in fact confirmed. The coincidence of what would (if L is not Longinus) be a correct attribution based on comparison with a misattributed text should perhaps have worried scholars more than it has done. There is, at least, a *prima facie* case for re-opening the question.

4. The treatise and Longinus' career

Longinus was probably born between AD 200 and 213.²² As an adolescent he travelled widely with his parents, and studied philosophy with a number of teachers, spending most time in Alexandria with the Platonists Ammonius and Origen (F2 = Porphyry *Life of Plotinus* 20).²³ He subsequently settled in Athens, where his maternal uncle, the otherwise unknown Fronto of Emesa, taught rhetoric; Longinus was Fronto's heir (F1b = *Suda* Φ735). In Athens he taught literature, rhetoric and philosophy. He moved to Palmyra in the mid- or late-260s,²⁴ and was an adviser to Zenobia. When Aurelian captured Palmyra in 273 Longinus was executed on suspicion of complicity in her revolt (F6b = Zosimus 1.56.2f.).

This last stage of his career has tended to dominate perceptions of Longinus. Edward Gibbon wrote in his journal for 11th September 1762:²⁵

²¹ See, in particular, their role in Hermogenes' analyses of the types of style. For rhythm as a generic variable see Berry 1996.

²² These approximate *termini* are established by Brisson and Patillon 1994, 5219f. The date usually given (c. 213) is based solely on the assumption (which attains the status of a fact in Longinus' entry in *PLRE* I) that he was about twenty years older than his pupil Porphyry.

²³ On the confusing prosopography see Edwards 1993. Ammonius, teacher of Plotinus and the neoplatonist Origen, must be distinguished from Ammonius, teacher of the Christian Origen. The former is the Platonist with whom Longinus also studied. Edwards suggests that the latter is the Peripatetic mentioned by Longinus (*ibid.*) as a distinguished scholar and polymath. But his only literary remains, according to Longinus, were 'poems and epideictic speeches'; contrast the many works attributable to Origen's teacher according to Eusebius (*HE* 6.19.10). Nor is there any reason to believe that the Peripatetic Ammonius (known also to Philostratus: *VS* 618) was based in Alexandria. (The Ammonius mentioned by L (13.3) has, of course, nothing to do with any of these: see (e.g.) Russell *ad loc.*)

²⁴ If his *Odaenethus* (F6e = Lib. *Ep.* 1078) was an epideictic speech in honour of the Palmyrene king, Longinus must have been in Palmyra before (or, if it was a funeral speech, not long after) Odaenethus' death in 267.

²⁵ Low 1929, 139.

When I reflect on the age in which Longinus lived, an age which produced scarce any other writer worthy the attention of posterity, when real learning was almost extinct, Philosophy sunk down to the quibbles of Grammarians and the tricks of mountebanks, and the Empire desolated by every Calamity, I am amazed that at such a period, in the heart of Syria, and at the Court of an Eastern Monarch, Longinus could produce a work worthy of the best and freest days of Athens.

Weiske, too, when he launched the case against Longinus' authorship referred specifically to the age of Aurelian (AD 270-275).²⁶ But there is no reason to suppose that the treatise (if Longinus wrote it) was a product of his last years. It is more likely to have been written when he was teaching in Athens. The author has been reading Caecilius with Terentianus (1.1), a young man (15.1); the obvious inference is that Terentianus was a pupil.²⁷ The addressee of Longinus' *On the End* was a Roman named Marcellus (F2 = Porphyry *Life of Plotinus* 20), most probably a pupil.²⁸ One might compare book 3 of the pseudo-Hermogenean *On Invention*,²⁹ addressed to a former pupil named Marcus Julius (126.2-4). Needless to say, the address to a Roman pupil does not imply that the author himself taught in Rome; Romans continued to go to Athens to study in the imperial period (one thinks, for example, of Apuleius and Aulus Gellius in the second century).

Longinus, by all ancient accounts, was a major figure in the intellectual landscape of his time. Porphyry, the most distinguished of his pupils, describes him as the greatest critic of the age (F5 = *Life of Plotinus* 20: τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς κριτικώτατου γενομένου). For Eunapius he was 'a living library, and a research institute on legs' (βιβλιοθήκη τις ἦν ἔμψυχος καὶ περιπατοῦν μουσεῖον), a critic on a par with Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and by far the most distinguished man among his contemporaries, to whose critical judgement everyone deferred (F3a = Eunapius *Lives of the Sophists* 4.1.1-6 (6.9-7.7 Giangrande)).

A glimpse of Longinus' intellectual milieu is provided by a fragment of Porphyry, describing a dinner given by Longinus on Plato's birthday (F4 = Eusebius *Praep. Evang.* 10.3 (Porphyry 408F Smith)); since Porphyry is one of those present, the dramatic date must be before 263, when he left Athens. At the top table, with Longinus himself, are the rhetoricians Nicagoras and Maior, the grammarian Apollonius, the geometer Demetrius and the philosophers Prosenes (a

²⁶ See n.58 below.

²⁷ The name Terentianus is secured by 1.4 etc., but at 1.1 P reads Ποστούμει Φλωρεντιανέ. Manutius' Ποστούμει Τερεντιανέ, printed by most editors, does not account satisfactorily for the transmitted reading. Marx 1898, 182-4 (cf. also Luck 1967, 102f.) advocates Schurzfleisch's Ποστούμει Φλ. Τερεντιανέ, and suggests a connection with the Flavii Postumii attested in the third century (T. Flavius Postumius Titianus = *PLRE* I Titianus (9); T. Flavius Postumius Varus = *PLRE* I Varus (2)).

²⁸ He has been identified plausibly with the senator Marcellus Or(r)ontius, who also studied with Plotinus (*Life of Plotinus* 7): cf. *RE* Suppl. 15, Marcellus (9a); *PLRE* I Orontius; Alföldi 1967, 256; Brisson *et al.* 1982, 96f.

²⁹ By Longinus' older contemporary Apsines (who also taught in Athens), if the conjecture in Heath 1998a is correct.

Peripatetic) and Callietes (a Stoic).³⁰ An argument between two other guests about the relative merits of the historians Theopompus and Ephorus prompts a wide-ranging discussion of literary plagiarism. The discussion touches at one point on Plato (10.3.24), to whom Prosenes is reluctant to apply that term; one may recall L's eagerness (13.4) to distinguish Plato's debt to Homer from plagiarism (κλοπή). In the course of this discussion Apollonius cites a judgement of Caecilius on Menander (10.3.13). So Caecilius' critical opinions were available to people in Longinus' intellectual circle in Athens, and of interest to them. This does not prove that Caecilius' writings were available (his opinions could have been known at second-hand), but there is no reason to doubt that they were. Caecilius was one of the main sources for Tiberius *On Figures*.³¹ Moreover, a collection of excerpts from Longinus (F16 = 213-6 Spengel-Hammer) contains observations on the classical orators that are paralleled in Photius, whose fuller version in one instance names Caecilius; the *prima facie* implication is that Photius derived material (probably indirectly) from Longinus, and that Longinus quoted and commented on Caecilius' views.³² Since we know that Longinus was interested in sublimity (the evidence is presented in §6 below) it is likely that he would have read Caecilius' treatment of the subject. L had written on sublimity before he wrote the extant treatise (at 9.2 he quotes his own earlier formulation); this antecedent interest is no doubt the reason why he chose to read Caecilius on sublimity with his pupil Terentianus. If Longinus is L, these data come together very neatly.³³

Another work of Caecilius that was no doubt of interest to L was his comparison of Cicero and Demosthenes (fr. 153 Ofenloch = Plutarch *Dem.* 3). We do not know whether L had direct knowledge of Cicero; his comparison of the two orators (12.4f.) may be wholly derivative. So the identification of L with Longinus may be maintained whatever the likelihood of a third-century Greek scholar having first-hand acquaintance with Cicero. First-hand acquaintance cannot, in fact, be excluded. Gellius (10.9.7) attests to Greeks acquainted with (although not enthusiastic about) Latin literature in the second century. Longinus' near-contemporary Gregory Thaumaturgus studied Latin in his youth, 'not with a view

³⁰ Demetrius and Apollonius were probably also among Porphyry's teachers: for Apollonius see Porphyry *QH* 1.111.9f. Sodano = 14T Smith; for Demetrius (*RE* Demetrios (118)) see Proclus *In Remp.* 2.23.14f. = 13T Smith. Nicagoras was probably related to the Minucianus who was a rival of Hermogenes, and on whose *Art of Rhetoric* Porphyry wrote a commentary: see Heath 1996. Maior wrote a work on *stasis*-theory, of which a few fragments are preserved. Prosenes and Callietes are not otherwise attested; nor are Caystrius and Maximus, the other guests mentioned.

³¹ Tiberius (probably the philosopher and sophist of *Suda* T550) also cites Apsines, and is therefore not earlier than the third century. Cf. Solmsen 1936; Ballaira 1968.

³² The ascription of the excerpts to Longinus has been disputed; I concur with Aulitzky 1927, 1411, and Brisson and Patillon 1998, 3078-80. I discuss the possible connection between Longinus and Photius more fully in Heath 1998; Treadgold's suggestion (1980, 50 n.53) that Photius drew on Proclus' *Chrestomathy* in his discussions of the ten orators would make good sense of the presence of Longinian material, in view of the interest shown in Longinus by Syrianus and his pupils Proclus, Hermias and Lachares (§6 below).

³³ The idea that L's reply must have been written close in time to Caecilius cannot be taken seriously: Plutarch wrote against Colotes (as Marx 1898, 194 observed; cf. Russell 1989, 309); Aelius Aristides wrote replies to Plato. It may also be mentioned in passing that the reference to Theodorus (presumably, of Gadara) in 3.5 does not imply that L was his pupil: Grube 1959, 356-65.

to perfect fluency, but so that I should not be wholly unacquainted with this language also'; and he was doing so before he thought of taking up Roman law, since it was his Latin tutor who suggested that he do so (*Panegyric on Origen* 56-9, *PG* 10.1065). The allusive etymology in Herodian 1.12.2 assumes a readership acquainted with Latin. Eusebius of Caesarea was able to translate documents from Latin. And there is evidence for bilingual texts of Cicero in the fourth century, at least.³⁴ But even if Longinus had no direct acquaintance with Cicero's works, there is no doubt that he would have been aware of his literary significance. In the third century Cassius Dio shows knowledge of Cicero's speeches;³⁵ he perhaps is a special case, but an allusion in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* (7.11f.) discloses, and assumes on the part of the reader, an awareness of Cicero as an author of philosophical dialogues.³⁶ In the third or fourth century Aristides Quintilianus refers (2.6) to Cicero's *Republic*,³⁷ and the following discussion shows knowledge of *Pro Roscio Comoedo* and the *Tusculan Disputations* (4.1.3). In (probably) the fourth century Sopater refers to Cicero as evidence that rhetoric had not entirely disappeared in the low period between the establishment of Macedonian hegemony and the renaissance of the second century AD (*RG* 5.8.11-18 Walz); this is part of an outline history of rhetoric that may derive indirectly from the commentary on Minucianus by Longinus' pupil Porphyry.³⁸

Another text beyond the usual range of reference of Greek critics but mentioned by L (9.9) is *Genesis*. Longinus is named as an admirer of Moses by John of Sicily (*RG* 6.211.12-15), but this testimonium must be treated with reserve, since it may simply reflect John's belief that Longinus wrote *On Sublimity*. Although John does preserve information about Longinus' *Philological Discourses* elsewhere,³⁹ in one other passage there is reason to believe that a reference to the *Philological Discourses* in John's source has been conflated with his own recollections of *On Sublimity* (see §6.3 below). Even so, L's reference to Moses fits easily into Longinus' intellectual background. At least three second-century pagan authors display familiarity with the *Genesis* cosmogony: Celsus regards it as an absurd myth, and subjects it to polemical attack; Galen evaluates it as a philosophical position, superior to Epicureanism though less complete than Platonist cosmology; Numenius (with whose work Longinus was certainly familiar) cites it with respect.⁴⁰

³⁴ Fisher 1982, 183-5; Rochette 1997, 188-98 on 'translations' of Virgil and Cicero (also 263-9: Greeks and Roman literature; 279-86: Greeks and Cicero).

³⁵ Gowing 1992, 237f.; Gowing 1998.

³⁶ Gowing 1998, 384-7.

³⁷ He may have derived the information from Suetonius' work (in Greek) on Cicero's *Republic* (*Suda* T895).

³⁸ Rabe 1931, xi-xiv. On Porphyry's rhetorical writings see Heath 2002, 2003.

³⁹ *RG* 6.93.7-94.2 (= F19), 95.1f. (= F21b), 225.9-29 (= F21e); and see n.10 for John's (unattributed) quotation from Longinus' *Art of Rhetoric*. John's references to Longinus are discussed in Mazzucchi 1990, this one at 187-9.

⁴⁰ Celsus: *Origen Against Celsus* 6.49-51, 60-61. Galen: *De Usu Partium* 3.905 Kühn; cf. Walzer 1949. Numenius: fr. 30 des Places (quoted by Porphyry *On the Cave of the Nymphs* 10); see also fr. 1, 9-10, 56. For Longinus' familiarity with Numenius' works see the preface to *On the End*, quoted in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* 20 = F2. Other Greek authors were aware of Moses: see

A related question arises from the parallels to Philo of Alexandria that have often been noted in *On Sublimity*. It has been argued that these parallels reflect knowledge of Philo on L's part; the case is not conclusive,⁴¹ but poses the question what bearing this would have on the identification of L with Longinus. We cannot expect to find confirmation that Longinus was familiar with Philo in the fragments;⁴² but we may ask whether it is plausible in principle. It is certainly true that pagan Platonists were not normally familiar with Philo;⁴³ but that is true of pagans in the first century as well as the third, so familiarity with Philo would pose no greater problem for the identification of L with Longinus than for any other hypothesis. The abnormality would at least be intelligible in Longinus' case: the man Eunapius described as 'a living library, and a research institute on legs' must have been exceptionally well-read.⁴⁴ The Christian theologian Origen did not regard it as unthinkable that interested pagans should read and admire Philo. When he suggests that Celsus alludes to Philo and other Jewish allegorists without having read them (*Against Celsus* 4.51) we should not necessarily believe him; the accusation that an opponent has not read the books he criticises is an obvious polemical device (compare the malicious insinuation at 4.42 that Celsus had not read *Genesis*), and Celsus had certainly read some non-canonical literature.⁴⁵ More significant is the fact that Origen treats Celsus' ignorance of Philo as a matter for satirical conjecture, rather than as something self-evident. Moreover, he suggests that Philo's style and content would command the respect of philosophers; similarly in 6.21 he commends Philo's *On Dreams* to inquirers. What would have motivated such inquirers? If Celsus did read Philo, it was of course to gather material for his polemic; similarly with the study of gnostic literature by Plotinus' pupils Amelius Gentilianus and Porphyry, and of the Bible

Gager 1972; Stern 1976-84, who discusses *inter alios* L (1.361-5), Numenius (2.206-16) and Galen (2.306-28); Rinaldi 1989.

⁴¹ Russell 1964, xxix-xxx. Norden 1954 argues (on the gratuitous assumption that the last chapter of *On Sublimity* records an actual discussion) that L met Philo in Rome; Kaibel 1899, 130 n.2 denies dependency; Runia 1986, 305f. is non-committal.

⁴² Plotinus, who offers far more material for comparison, has elicited radically different opinions. Responding to the similarities noted by Armstrong 1940, 70-74, 107-8, Rist 1967, 99-101 is sceptical 'on *a priori* grounds'; contrast Gatti 1996, 12, to whom Philo's influence on Plotinus seems 'undeniable'. For a judicious recent discussion see Meijer 1992, 326-8. Armstrong 1960, 393f. notes one possible parallel between Philo and Longinus, but concludes that it is superficial and probably fortuitous.

⁴³ In the case of Plotinus, my own view (for what it is worth) is that there is no evidence of familiarity; and I agree with Edwards 1990, who warns against over-estimating the extent and depth of Numenius' knowledge of Jewish thought. [M. Burnyeat, 'Platonism in the Bible: Numenius of Apamea on *Exodus* and eternity', in R. Salles (ed.), *Metaphysics, Soul, and Ethics in Ancient Thought* (Oxford 2005), 143-69 takes a more positive view of Numenius' knowledge of the biblical texts.]

⁴⁴ I note that the pagan grammarian Helladius (early fourth century) cited Philo (Photius cod. 279, 529b27-29); see Gager 1972, 129-31.

⁴⁵ See *Against Celsus* 4.52, on *Jason and Papiscus*. Andresen 1955 makes a strong case for Celsus' familiarity with the works of Justin; on Celsus and Philo see Stein 1932/3. Celsus' polemical purposes gave him as much motive to conceal the existence of intellectually respectable Jewish literature as Origen had to deny that Celsus had read it. I note in passing that Amelius Gentilianus referred favourably to the beginning of John's gospel (Eusebius *PE* 11.19); see Dörrie 1972.

by Porphyry.⁴⁶ But polemic is not the only possible motive. Jewish and Christian writers had long maintained that Plato drew on Moses; the description of Plato as ‘Moses in Attic Greek’ attributed to Numenius (fr. 8 des Places) concedes at least a substantial harmony between the two. An inquisitive and widely-read Platonist might well have thought it worth investigating the basis of this claim, and to that end have consulted both the Mosaic texts and the works of their most philosophically sophisticated exegete. It must not be forgotten that Longinus had done much of his philosophical training in Alexandria (and had done so when Origen was teaching in that city).⁴⁷ Against this background, it would be rash to reject the possibility that Longinus had read Philo on *a priori* grounds.

5. The case against Longinus: chapter 44

The preceding section offers no positive evidence for the identification of L with Longinus. My contention so far has been that the data fits without strain into what we know of Longinus’ intellectual milieu; in §6 I shall argue that a positive case can be made. But before that we must consider what are generally held to be the strongest arguments against the identification, based on the treatise’s concluding chapter. Russell, for example, comments that ‘the main—I think incontrovertible—argument rests on the discussion of *corrupta eloquentia* in 44.’⁴⁸ In this section I shall try to show that the argument can be controverted.

Chapter 44 consists of a dialogue between ‘a philosopher’ and L on the reasons for the state of modern literature. The philosopher suggests an explanation in terms of external political circumstances; L argues for an explanation in inner, moral terms. Parallels in first-century Latin literature have often been noted. But the existence of first-century parallels in itself tells us nothing about the date of *On Sublimity*.⁴⁹ It has to be shown that L’s discussion resembles these parallel

⁴⁶ Porphyry consulted Christian exegetical literature as well as the canonical texts: see the reference to Origen in *Against the Christians* fr. 38 Harnack (= Eusebius *HE* 6.19.5-8); cf. Wilken 1979, 129-30, Sellw 1989. Porphyry’s much-admired redating of *Daniel* surely owed something to his years of study with Longinus, a recognised authority on questions of attribution; critical discussion of such questions had long made use of arguments from chronology, and there is evidence that Longinus wrote a chronographic work in 18 books (Brisson and Patillon 1998, 3104 are sceptical, but fail to take account of Mosshammer 1979, 140-6, 157f., 167; cf. Croke 1983, 184).

⁴⁷ Longinus’ familiarity with Philo would be easy to explain if we accept any of the following: (i) Longinus’ teacher Origen was the Christian; (ii) Longinus’ teacher Ammonius was the teacher of Origen the Christian; (iii) the Peripatetic Ammonius mentioned by Longinus was the teacher of Origen the Christian; or (iv) Longinus was instrumental in converting Zenobia to Judaism (see Merlan 1964, 19 n.21). But all these claims should be discounted: I follow Edwards 1993 in rejecting (i) and (ii), and regard his proposal (iii) with caution (see n.23); (iv) relies on an unconvincing interpretation of Photius cod. 265, 492a27-40 (F6c).

⁴⁸ Russell 1964, xxv. Cf. Weiske 1809, 217: ‘mouet me item oratio philosophi vel veri vel ficti sect. 44... ut hunc librum non multo post oppressam reipublicae libertatem scriptum esse credam.’

⁴⁹ The third-century sophist Callinicus wrote a work on rhetorical *κακοζηλία* (*Suda* K231). It is quite possible that this was purely technical in its approach (cf. [Hermog.] *Inv.* 4.12); but that is not certain, and it would be manifestly absurd to claim on the basis of first-century Roman texts that Callinicus in the third century could not have offered political and moral explanations for current literary taste.

texts in ways that positively imply a first-century date, or that make a third-century date improbable.

The principle of explaining cultural failings in political and moral terms would certainly have been familiar to a third-century Platonist. In the *Laws* (831b-2d) Plato attributes neglect of military training to the demoralising effect of love of money (831c4), with the accompanying indulgence in pleasures (831d8-e2), and to the corrupting influence of defective political systems (832b10-c7).⁵⁰ Love of money (φιλοχρηματία, φιλαργυρία) and love of pleasure (φιληδονία) are likewise the key terms in L's moral analysis (44.6). Porphyry, too, connects the love of pleasure with the love of money, the latter leading inevitably to injustice and lawless behaviour towards gods, parents and others (*Ad Marcellam* 14). Earlier in the same work (5) Porphyry reminds us that genuine goods cannot be attained through indolence (ῥαστώνη); L too deplores the debilitating effect of idleness (ῥαθυμία 44.11). According to Hierax, a Platonist of (perhaps) the second century AD,⁵¹ wealth encourages idleness and inflames pleasures, and also leads to plots against others (Stobaeus 4.31.92); compare the behaviour which on L's account is produced by wealth: bribery, the contrivance of other people's deaths, legacy-hunting (44.9). Legacy-hunting is a theme in Lucian's *Timon* (21-23),⁵² which also contains a striking parallel to L's imagery in 44.7: in *Timon* 28 the door is opened to Wealth, and he enters accompanied by an undesirable entourage; he is the father of evils like self-importance (τῦφος), slackness (μαλακία), arrogant aggression (ὑβρις) and deceit (ἀπάτη); and these provide a bodyguard (δορυφορούμενον ὑπ' αὐτῶν) which protects the intruder against ejection.⁵³

Against this background, it does not seem to be possible to argue either that political and moral explanations of cultural trends were in principle beyond the reach of a third-century Platonist philosopher such as Longinus, or that the particular content and expression of L's moral analysis would be out of place in the third century. If chapter 44 is to sustain a case against Longinus, therefore, more specific inconsistencies must be identified between L's discussion and third-century political and literary circumstances. The argument advanced by those who believe that such inconsistencies exist has, like Cerberus, three heads.

5.1 Democracy and servitude

The philosopher's political explanation turns on a contrast between democracy, which stimulates great literature, and slavery, which (although 'just')

⁵⁰ The parallel was noted by Kaibel 1899, 125f. For the link between love of money and of pleasure cf. e.g. *Rep.* 580e.

⁵¹ Thus Praechter 1906 (for the background to this fragment see esp. 598f., 615); but in *RE* s.v. Hierax (9) he is less sure of the arguments against identification with the Hierax mentioned in Damascius' *Life of Isidore*.

⁵² Cf. Luc. *Dial. Mort.* 15-19, 21. Russell's comment *ad loc.* ('topical at any period in the first or second century', perhaps assuming that a third-century date for L can be excluded on other grounds) sets the chronological limits too narrowly; in later authors see (e.g.) Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 5.9.15-18; Amm. Marc. 14.6.22, 28.4.22; Lib. *Or.* 54.70.

⁵³ This detail recalls the imagery of passages such as *Rep.* 560bc, 573ae, 587b; cf. Russell on 44.7 for L's debt to the *Republic* in this section.

stifles it (44.1-5). This contrast can be understood as referring to the transition from republic to principate, and on this interpretation is urged as support for a date earlier than the third century. On another interpretation, however, the philosopher is comparing the freedom and autonomy which the Greek cities enjoyed in the classical period with their subjection under the Roman empire. There can be no doubt that L has this contrast in mind.⁵⁴ Apart from the brief (and cautious) discussion of Cicero, he is interested exclusively in Greek eloquence. It makes good sense to say that the loss of the autonomy of the classical Greek city-state had an effect on Greek literature, and especially on oratory. Indeed, it was a commonplace in late ancient histories of rhetoric to date the decline of rhetoric to the Macedonian domination.⁵⁵ By contrast, it would only make sense to say that the end of the Roman republic explained the lack of sublimity in Greek literature if one were willing to assert that Hellenistic authors had achieved it—not an opinion we can attribute to L. There is no reason why a third-century writer should not reflect on the difference between his own circumstances and those of the writers of classical Athens whose works he studied so intensively. A comparison with the conditions of the classical period (which was also the classical period of Greek literature) was of perennial relevance to Greek critics and rhetors.

L must, then, be referring *at least* to the contrast between classical Greece and Greece under imperial rule. It does not follow that he is referring *only* to that contrast. The two references are not mutually exclusive, and the contrast between republic and principate would have undeniable relevance in a treatise addressed to a Roman; it might therefore be thought attractive to understand a text written by a Greek and addressed to a Roman in both frames of reference. This interpretation would not preclude a date in the third century. Cassius Dio (52; 53.17, 19) provides a third-century parallel for the use of ‘democracy’ with reference to the republic.⁵⁶ If a third-century writer could reflect on the relative benefits of republican ‘democracy’ and the principate in the political sphere, it is not clear why a third-century writer should not reflect on their cultural implications in similar terms. So a dual frame of reference would not preclude a third-century date. Even if it did, however, nothing would follow about the date of composition of *On Sublimity*. The supposition of a dual frame of reference may be attractive, but it is not essential: it is possible to make sense of the text in terms of the classical/imperial contrast alone. In this case, therefore, we should have to conclude that the treatise is *either* a first-century text exploiting both frames of reference *or* a third-century text exploiting only the classical/imperial contrast. In the absence of evidence for the date of the text based on other considerations, a choice between these two possibilities could not be made without circularity. Consequently, no conclusion about the date of the treatise can be drawn from this part of the philosopher’s argument.

⁵⁴ Rightly emphasised by de Ste Croix 1981, 324f.

⁵⁵ Sopater *RG* 5.8.5-12 (for Porphyry as the probable source see n.38 above); *PS* 60.8-11, 189.20-190.4.

⁵⁶ For the Roman republic as a ‘democracy’ see de Ste Croix 1981, 322f. For the contemporary relevance of Dio’s debate see Millar 1964, 104-118.

5.2 World peace

In L's reply to the philosopher the terms are changed: where the philosopher had spoken of servitude, L speaks of 'world peace' (ἡ τῆς οἰκουμένης εἰρήνη 44.6). This substitution implies that in the philosopher's theory (which L rejects) democracy and war are connected with each other, as well as with eloquence. The association of democracy, war and eloquence is especially apposite with reference to classical Greece: one thinks of fourth-century Athens, the resistance to Macedon, and Demosthenes (the all-time classic of Greek oratory); of Periclean Athens, the Peloponnesian War, and Thucydides (an important model for orators); and of the Persian Wars (which, although they did not produce an oratorical model of comparable importance, were a never-failing inspiration to later Greek rhetoricians).

The description of the other side of the contrast has been seen as an argument against Longinus' authorship: 'the mention of world peace is inconceivable in a writer of the middle of the third century.'⁵⁷ When Weiske expressed scepticism about dating the treatise to the age of Aurelian he made especial mention of the wars.⁵⁸ But, as we have already seen, Longinus' authorship would not imply a date at the end of his career; if he wrote the treatise, he probably did so while he was a teacher in Athens. Precision in this regard is important, since conditions in the middle of the third century changed rapidly. If Longinus was the author, a date in (say) the 240s (when he would have been aged somewhere between 30 and 50) would have to be considered; so we must ask whether the reference to world peace would have made sense at that time. Three points may be made.

First, hindsight should not be allowed to distort our judgement. 'Nowadays we speak of the third century crisis but contemporaries did not view it in the same light. At least until 250 there was no realization of a general, all-pervasive crisis.'⁵⁹ Someone writing in the 240s could not have foreseen the defeat and death of Decius at the hands of the Goths in 251, or the subsequent threat of Gothic penetration into the Greek mainland in 254 (prompting work to restore Athens' defences, unneeded and neglected for so long); nor could he have foreseen the capture of Valerian by the Persians in 259, or the arrival of the Heruli in Athens itself in 267.

Secondly, evidence from this period shows that current conditions could be described in terms of peace. The Ephesians erected inscriptions which celebrate Gordian III (AD 238-244) for augmenting and restoring peace to the world (*IEph.* 302-304, 4336); the reference is presumably to his victory over the Persians in 242. The pseudo-Dionysian author on epideictic, writing perhaps in the first half of the third century,⁶⁰ recommends concluding a *panegyrikos* with praise of the

⁵⁷ Russell 1964, xxv.

⁵⁸ Weiske 1809, 214: 'haecine ad Aureliani aevum, quo tot bella, in Oriente praesertim?'; 217: 'Tum illa τῆς οἰκουμένης εἰρήνη... vix cadit in Aureliani seculum'.

⁵⁹ de Blois 1984, 363f. See further Alföldy 1974: Cyprian's view changes after 250.

⁶⁰ In view of the reference to Nicostratus (266.14) the text cannot be dated before the latter part of the second century; and the less detailed and less technically sophisticated prescriptions suggest a date earlier than Menander, at the end of the third century.

emperor, specifically as the guarantor of peace (259.16-19 Usener-Radermacher): ‘The colophon, so to speak, of your whole discourse should be praise of the emperor: that the true organiser of all festivals is he who presides over peace (ὁ τὴν εἰρήνην πρυτανεύων), since it is peace that enables the festivals to be held.’ This approach can be observed in practice in the speech *Eis Basilea* preserved among Aristides’ works. This is a speech in praise of the emperor at a festival (1, ἐν ἑορτῇ καὶ ἐν ἱερομηνίᾳ), and it celebrates *inter alia* peace (36f.): ‘Every continent is at peace, land and sea crown their protector, Greeks and barbarians now speak with a single voice, and the empire, like a ship or wall, is repaired and fortified and gathers in its goods in security.’ The attribution to Aristides is widely discounted; a third-century date is favoured, and some have argued that the addressee is Philip the Arab (AD 244-249). The question cannot be regarded as settled,⁶¹ but for present purposes the significant point is that a date in the 240s can be maintained without absurdity. The celebration of peace certainly agrees with the image promoted through Philip’s coinage: *Pax fundata cum Persis*, *Pax Augusti*, *Pax Aeterna*, *Securitas Orbis*.⁶² L’s reference to world peace would therefore sit quite happily with imperial propaganda of the 240s, and constitutes no barrier to his identification with Longinus.⁶³

Thirdly, we should be clear what an author of the imperial period might have meant by peace, since ‘peace’ is a relative term.⁶⁴ Appian, writing in the Antonine era, could look back on a period of almost two hundred years of peace (*proem* 24): ‘everything advanced in long and stable peace to secure prosperity’. He was aware, of course, that the period described in these terms had seen a great deal of fighting: wars on the frontiers, the annihilation of three legions in Germany, the annexation and evacuation of provinces, revolutions in Judaea, wars between rival claimants to the purple, and so on. But none of this invalidates his point. By contrast with the series of wars against major foreign powers during the republic, and with the civil wars which threatened the disintegration of the Roman world towards the end of the republic, the principate was a time of peace: civil conflict was kept in check, conflict with external powers was pushed out to the frontiers, and the conduct of those external wars was the business of a relatively small professional army. From this point of view, wars on the frontiers undertaken by the imperial power are not a negation of peace; on the contrary, they are a proof that the imperial power is maintaining the peace by warding off external threats.

Appian’s primary concern is Roman history; L’s primary concern is Greek literature. But the same principle applies when one compares classical Greece

⁶¹ The debate is conveniently summarised by Pernot 1993, 1.261-5.

⁶² *CIR* 4.3, Philip 69, 72; 99-100; 40-42, 105b, 184-5, 227, 231, 268; 48, 124, 142, 190. The themes are, of course, perennial, but seem especially insistent in Philip’s coinage.

⁶³ Some slightly earlier examples illustrate the place of this motif in imperial propaganda: Athenagoras *Leg.* 1.2 (addressed to M. Aurelius and Commodus, AD 176-80); Cassius Dio 72.15.3 (Commodus, AD 180-92); *IBulg* 659.27-9 (AD 198), with Reynolds 1983, 127-8 (a letter from Severus and Caracalla, AD 198).

⁶⁴ My country has fought two high-intensity conventional wars in the last twenty years, and conducted numerous other military operations, but I have experienced nothing but peace: remote conflicts fought out by professional soldiers have not had an impact on me comparable to the experiences of my father and grandfathers, who were combatants in World Wars.

with Greece under Roman rule. Greek communities within the empire no longer had scope for (and were no longer exposed to the risks of) war as a way of settling disputes among themselves; and security against external threats was undertaken by the ruling power.⁶⁵ An illuminating parallel can be found in John Chrysostom's exegesis of Isaiah 2.4, 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more' (*In Is.* 2.5). He argues that the Christian era has seen the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy: there is now world peace (πολλή κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην εἰρήνην). It is true that there are still wars, but war has been transformed. In ancient Israel everyone had to fight; similarly in classical Athens—even philosophers, like Socrates, and orators, like Demosthenes, served in the army. Now, by contrast, ordinary people can leave military service to professional soldiers, sitting safely in their cities and hearing only reports of wars fought on the frontiers of the Roman empire. The messianic prophecy and the references to the Old Testament are part of John's Christian culture; but the contrast between the contemporary world and classical Greece would have been just as apposite in the 240s. From the perspective of an Athenian academic, the world was then indeed at peace.

5.3 The state of literature

The third argument against Longinus' authorship derived from chapter 44 is based on the pessimistic view which it takes of the state of literature: 'after the rise of the Second Sophistic Greek literary men were no longer as modest as is L about the achievements of their own age'.⁶⁶ To evaluate this objection, we need to pay careful attention to the beginning of the philosopher's speech (44.1):

θαυμά μ' ἔχει... πῶς ποτε κατὰ τὸν ἡμέτερον αἰῶνα πιθανὰ μὲν ἐπ' ἄκρον καὶ πολιτικά, δριμεῖαί τε καὶ ἐντρεχεῖς καὶ μάλιστα πρὸς ἡδονὰς λόγων εὐφοροί, ὑψηλαὶ δὲ λίαν καὶ ὑπερμεγέθεις, πλὴν εἰ μὴ τι σπάνιον, οὐκέτι γίνονται φύσεις. τοσαύτη λόγων κοσμικὴ τις ἐπέχει τὸν βίον ἀφορία.

I am surprised... how there can be in our own time natures that are in the highest degree persuasive and suitable for public life, penetrating and vigorous and above all rich in literary charm, but not any longer those that are truly sublime and transcendent—or else they are few and far between. Such is the universal dearth of literature that has us in its grip.

The philosopher does not deny that there are good writers; on the contrary, he asserts that there are writers with a variety of talents and virtues. So the starting-point for this debate is not an absence of literary talent; still less is it a question of 'corrupt' eloquence, as it had been for some first-century Roman critics.⁶⁷ What

⁶⁵ Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 824c; Lucian *Rhet. Praec.* 10 (in both cases with reference to the implications for contemporary oratory). Herodian (3.2.8) sees the endemic conflicts among Greeks as the root of their conquest by Macedon and Rome; 'enslavement' to Rome has not eliminated the rivalry between Greek communities, but has constrained and redirected it.

⁶⁶ Russell 1964, xxv. Cf. Weiske 1809, 215: 'explicent quaeso si qui posthac erunt Longini sectatores pulcerrimam illam conquestionem de oratorum defectu.'

⁶⁷ Gibbon (25th Oct. 1762 = Low 1929, 172) contrasts Longinus (i.e. L) and Seneca (*Ep.* 94): 'both attribute the decay of taste to Luxury and its attendant vices', L 'considering <them> almost as passive, thinks that they only extinguish all emulation and application', whereas Seneca 'looks

exercises the philosopher is not the presence of literary vices, nor even the absence of positive literary qualities, but the absence of the greatest of literary excellences, sublimity. He does not even, strictly speaking, claim that this excellence is completely lacking in modern literature; but authors who can achieve it are scarce (σπάνιον). This need not be read as a coy way of saying that there are none; Longinus characterises the state of contemporary philosophy as one of ‘indescribable scarcity’ (ὁ μὲν γὰρ νῦν καιρὸς οὐδ’ εἰπεῖν ἔστιν ὅσην σπάνιν ἔσχηκε τοῦ πράγματος), but in the same context acknowledges Plotinus and Amelius Gentilianus as philosophers of high calibre (F2 = Porphyry *Life of Plotinus* 20).

The view of modern literature taken in this chapter, therefore, is not so pessimistic as is sometimes supposed. Indeed, the assessment of contemporary writers elsewhere in the treatise is more hostile, in the sense that it identifies real vices: the craze for novelty of thought which leads to lapses from dignity (5), and the importing of poetic exaggerations into oratory (15.8). But these remarks are no more damning (and no less consistent with a date of composition after the rise of the second sophistic) than those of Hermogenes (377.10-13 Rabe): ‘the style that appears to be forceful, though in reality it is not (which as I said is the third kind of forcefulness), is that of the sophists: I mean Polus, Gorgias, Meno, and not a few—not to say all—of the writers of our own day.’⁶⁸

The most highly regarded author of the second sophistic was Aelius Aristides, and there is evidence that Longinus admired him. Sopater’s *Prolegomena to Aristides* (118.1-4 Lenz = F18) attributes to ‘Longinus and all the critics’ an assessment of him as fertile, skilled in argumentation, forcible⁶⁹ and in general an imitator of Demosthenes. There are also two references in the excerpts (F16). Excerpt 5 (214.4-6 Spengel-Hammer) observes that Aristides, like Demosthenes, often transcends the rules of rhetorical art. Excerpt 12 (215.9-11) credits him with setting right the faults of style associated with Asianism, and with a fluent and persuasive manner (ὅτι τὴν πλεονάσασαν περὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν ἔκλυσιν ἀνεκτίσαστο Ἀριστείδης· συνεχῶς γὰρ ἔστι καὶ ῥέων καὶ πιθανός).⁷⁰ It might be felt, therefore, that the absence of any mention of Aelius Aristides in *On Sublimity* is surprising, if it is by Longinus. But there is no mention of Aristides in Longinus’ *Art of Rhetoric* (F15a-b) either. Hermogenes again provides a relevant comparison. Aristides receives only two mentions in *On Types of Style* (244.20-245.3, 353.22-354.6); in the latter passage Hermogenes hastens to explain that he does not mean to imply that a passage of Aristides is better than the passage of Demosthenes with which it is compared—that would be insane (μαινόμεν γὰρ

upon them as very active, by accustoming our taste to relish only the tricks of novelty and affectation, and to despise genuine and simple eloquence’.

⁶⁸ I note that Gorgias’ conceit (DK 82B5a = fr. 14 Sauppe) about vultures as ‘living tombs’, though often echoed in ancient literature (see Norden 1915, 384f.; Lightfoot on Ignatius *Rom.* 4; Russell 1964, 69, on *Subl.* 3.2), seems to be quoted and criticised only by Hermogenes (249.2 Rabe), his commentator Athanasius (*PS* 180.15-18 Rabe), and L (3.2) among extant authors.

⁶⁹ ‘Forcible’ (βίαιος) may refer to the technique (associated especially with Demosthenes) of turning an opponent’s argument back on itself: cf. Heath 1997, 112f.

⁷⁰ In F20 Aristides is apparently listed as one of ten classic orators; but since he displaces Hyperides there is reason to suspect the text (the whole fragment is deeply corrupt).

ὄν, εἰ τοῦτο λέγοιμι); and Aristides is not in Hermogenes' 'reading list'.⁷¹ So admiration for a non-classical author does not, in this period, necessarily carry through into his adoption as a model. The opening paragraph of Hermogenes *On Types of Style* speaks of the critical evaluation of both classical and modern authors (213.6-10), but only the classical authors are held up as models for imitation and emulation (213.10-214.6); L would hardly disagree (13f.). So Aristides' absence gives no solid grounds for suspicion.

It must also be remembered that *On Sublimity* is not about good writing or oratory in general; it is about a specific literary effect. So the absence of Aelius Aristides from the treatise would only be significant if he is regarded an exemplar of sublimity. We have no decisive evidence of Longinus' views on this point, but I will mention, very tentatively, one possible clue. In excerpt 12, as we have seen, Longinus describes Aristides as 'fluent' (ῥέων, 215.10), a term that is not suggestive of the characteristics which L most often associates with sublimity. It is reminiscent of the way in which L describes Cicero (χύσις, 12.4) and Hyperides (κεχυμένως, 34.2), in *contrast* with the lightning of Demosthenes' sublimity (12.4f.). As Marx observes,⁷² the distinction between Demosthenes' sublimity and Cicero's χύσις is parallel to the distinction in what precedes (12.1f.) between sublimity and amplification. The point must not be pressed too hard. Amplification, though it is distinct from sublimity, is consistent with it; and the contrast between Cicero and Demosthenes is analogous (12.4) to that between Plato (cf. 12.3 κέχυται, 13.1 χεύομαι... ῥέων) and Demosthenes—and Plato does achieve sublimity, although not of the same kind as Demosthenes. But it is at least possible that in Longinus' judgement Aristides' amplification, though skilful, failed to achieve sublimity. If so (and such an assessment of Aristides would not, perhaps, be unreasonable), he would have held that Aristides had many positive qualities but was lacking in sublimity; and this is the very view which the philosopher takes of the best modern literature in 44.1. Aristides' absence from *On Sublimity* is therefore no obstacle to Longinus' authorship.

6. A case for Longinus

If the arguments presented in the preceding sections are successful, then Longinus is a candidate for the authorship of *On Sublimity* who cannot lightly be dismissed. What I hope to have shown so far, then, is that it is possible that Longinus was L. It is now time to see whether 'possible' can be turned into 'probable'. Various parallels between *On Sublimity* and Longinus' *Art of Rhetoric* have been noted before.⁷³ For example, Longinus' remark that 'such language is as it were a light for the thoughts and arguments' (F15b, 186.19-20 Spengel-Hammer) is reminiscent of L's 'in truth, beautiful words are the very light of thought' (φῶς γὰρ τῷ ὄντι ἴδιον τοῦ νοῦ τὰ καλὰ ὀνόματα, 30.1).⁷⁴ Instead of

⁷¹ The only writer not in the classical canon to be included is Nicostratus (407.8-18, 409.4; cf. 329.10). On Hermogenes and Aristides see Rutherford 1998, 101-4.

⁷² Marx 1898, 173. On L's assessment of Cicero see Neuberger-Donath 1987, 114-7.

⁷³ See Marx 1898, 197-200 (contrast Kaibel 1899, 116f.); Luck 1967, 107-12.

⁷⁴ The closest parallel I have found is Maximus of Tyre 11.1: φῶς ἐξ ὀνομάτων πορισάμενος.

going over this ground again, I shall concentrate on connections between the critical interests and vocabulary of L and Longinus that have received comparatively little attention.

6.1 Plato's sublimity

Which ancient critic illustrated the achievement of sublimity by detailed analysis of a passage from the *Timaeus*? There are two answers: L, who discusses an extended series of metaphors from the *Timaeus* in 32.5-7; and Longinus, whose analysis of the opening sentence of the dialogue is recorded in Proclus' commentary (F10a = *In Tim.* 1.17.4-20).

Before we look at this analysis in detail, something should be said of the general view of Plato's style taken by Longinus and by L. Russell, summarising the grounds for doubting Longinus' authorship of the treatise, remarks that he has 'a somewhat harsh view of Plato's style';⁷⁵ but that is misleading. In his exposition of the *Timaeus* (probably lectures reported by Porphyry, rather than a written commentary) Longinus repeatedly drew attention to the care that Plato took over style. He comments, for example, on the techniques which Plato used to achieve stylistic beauty in *Timaeus* 19b (F10e = *In Tim.* 1.59.10-60.1), taking issue with those Platonists who maintained that Plato's style was spontaneous rather than being the product of artistic care (ἀντοφυή... ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκ τέχνης πεπορισμένην); we may recall L's assertion (2) of the necessity of art against those who think that nature is all and art demeaning. Longinus advances a two-stage argument against his opponents: first, Plato's choice of vocabulary is not the product of chance; but, secondly, even it were just the ordinary language of the day, Plato's care over the arrangement (συνθήκη)⁷⁶ of his words is undeniable. This, he continues, is universally admired, even if some have found fault with his use of metaphor. The variation in *Timaeus* 21a (ἀρχαῖον... παλαιὸν... οὐ νέον) also prompts appreciative comment (F10j = 1.86.17-25). Proclus goes on to report (1.86.25-87.6) that Longinus' teacher Origen denied that Plato aimed at an artificially pleasurable and elegant style;⁷⁷ Origen must therefore be one of the opponents against whom Longinus was arguing in his discussion of *Timaeus* 19b. There he neither confirms nor denies the validity of the criticisms of Plato's use of metaphor; but another fragment (F10h = *In Tim.* 1.68.3-12), describing an adaptation of a Homeric idiom as 'utterly strange' (παντελῶς ἀλλόκοτον), shows that he did not regard Plato's style as faultless.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Russell 1964, xxv. For a survey of ancient stylistic comment on Plato in Walsdorff 1927, esp. 42-9 (on L), 92-7 (on Longinus).

⁷⁶ Longinus' use of συνθήκη in F10e (1.59.19) and excerpts 3 and 7 (213.12, 214.10), instead of L's σύνθεσις, is not an argument against their identification: the fragment of the *Rhetoric* has σύνθεσις (F15b, 189.7). The same variation appears in Hermogenes *On Types of Style* (σύνθεσις at 218.23, thereafter συνθήκη) and [Hermog.] *On Invention* 4.4 (ἡ τῶν πνευμάτων συνθήκη ἀκμή ἐστίν, 189.21f.; ἡ τῶν τριῶν πνευμάτων σύνθεσις ἀκμή γέγονεν 193.18f.).

⁷⁷ Since Origen wrote little (F2 = Porphyry *Life of Plotinus* 20) we can be confident that the testimonia preserved in Proclus' commentary came to Porphyry from Longinus.

⁷⁸ That this is meant as an adverse comment is shown by the contrasting view of Origen, that the expression is acceptable in prose (1.68.12-15). One further fragment (F10l = *In Tim.* 1.93.31-94.9) is more probably a comment on the text than the style. For Longinus' sensitivity to the possibility

Turning to the excerpts from Longinus (F16), excerpt 7 (214.10-15) discusses rhythmical effects in the construction of cola designed to achieve a style that is magnificent and solemn (εὐογκος... καὶ σεμνή); Plato and Demosthenes are the best judges of such matters. Excerpt 9 (214.27f.) identifies Plato as the first to succeed in transferring Homeric magnificence (ῥγκος) into prose. This positive view of Plato's Homeric magnificence might seem to contradict the epitome of the *Art of Rhetoric* (F15a, 212.4-6 Spengel-Hammer = 88-90 Gautier), which finds fault with Plato's technical failings (ἀτεχνία) in mixing styles and with a magnificence too poetic for prose; but there is no real conflict. First, this criticism comes in a context which takes a very favourable view of Plato's style: he is identified as one of seven stylistic models, 'men outstanding in respect of every excellence, who join in giving order to our style' (ἄνδρας κρατίστους διὰ πάσης ἀρετῆς, ὅπόσοι τὴν φράσιν ἡμῶν συγκοσμοῦσι); there is also a favourable mention in the body of the *Rhetoric* (F15b, 187.22). Secondly, we have already seen (F10h) that Longinus did not think that Plato was invariably successful in his imitation of Homer. Thirdly, the context in the *Art of Rhetoric* is significant: Plato is a great stylist, but not in all respects a safe stylistic model; a teacher of rhetoric who failed to warn his pupils of the dangers of imitating Plato's style too closely would be doing them a disservice.⁷⁹

Overall, therefore, Longinus has a very positive view of Plato's style, although he is aware that it has been criticised and does not deny that Plato sometimes falls into stylistic error. And this is precisely L's view. Plato is one of the demigods (4.4, 6), especially notable for his emulation of Homer (13.2-4). But he does fall into stylistic error: he sometimes lapses into frigidity (4.4, 6f.); he makes fine use of periphrasis (28.2), but his use of figures is not always timely and lays him open to ridicule (29.1); his metaphors are sometimes sublime (32.5-8), but also sometimes expose him to adverse criticism (32.7).

We may return now to Longinus' analysis of the opening sentence of *Timaeus* (17a1-3):

εἶς, δύο, τρεῖς· ὁ δὲ δὴ τέταρτος ἡμῶν, ᾧ φίλε Τίμαιε, ποῦ τῶν χθὲς μὲν
δαιτυμόνων, τὰ νῦν δὲ ἐστιατόρων;

One, two three—but where is the fourth, my dear Timaeus, of those who were
guests at yesterday's feast, but are now the banquet's hosts?

Longinus notes the contrasting characteristics of the three cola. The first ('One, two three...') is commonplace (εὐτελής πῶς... καὶ κοινόν), and the asyndeton tends to make the style flat (ὑπτίον). In the second colon ('... but where is the fourth, my dear Timaeus...') the exallage, the grander diction and the continuity of the words (συνέχεια τῶν λέξεων)⁸⁰ lends the style greater dignity. But the third colon ('... of those who were guests at yesterday's feast, but are now the banquet's

of textual corruption compare his claim (F5 = Porphyry *Life of Plotinus* 19-20) that a copy of some works of Plotinus made for him by Amelius was seriously corrupt (an erroneous conclusion, according to Porphyry, but one which many readers of Plotinus may find comforting).

⁷⁹ I return to this passage in Appendix (c).

⁸⁰ I assume by contrast with the preceding asyndeton; Brisson and Patillon 1998, 3099 think of the absence of hiatus (citing Hermog. *Id.* 306.24-307.2).

hosts?') confers grace and sublimity (χάρις τε καὶ ὕψος) on the first two; by the grace and charm of its diction and through the trope it gives the whole period elevation and sublimity (ἅμα τῇ χάριτι καὶ τῇ ὥρᾳ τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ διὰ τῆς τροπῆς ἐπῆρε καὶ ὕψωσε τὴν ὅλην περίοδον).

This analysis is interesting, since the sentence contains no elevated thought or passion; it is an example of sublimity achieved purely through sentence-construction. Kleve, arguing that L was a rhetorician rather than a philosopher, has suggested that 'for a Platonist one would think that to have elevated thoughts or ideas was a necessary condition for attaining sublimity', while on the evidence of ch. 39 for L 'mere skill in sentence composition' suffices.⁸¹ The evidence shows that Longinus agrees with L against Kleve's hypothetical Platonist. In fact Longinus was himself a Platonist, but it may be relevant to recall Plotinus' comment on reading two of Longinus' philosophical works:⁸² that he was a literary scholar, but by no means a philosopher (φιλόλογος μὲν, φιλόσοφος δὲ οὐδαμῶς F3c = Porphyry *Life of Plotinus* 14). This judgement is repeated by Proclus after reporting one of Longinus' stylistic analyses (F10j = *In Tim.* 1.86.24f.); for Proclus sympathises with the Platonists opposed by Longinus, and feels that preoccupation with style (πολυπραγμοσύνη τῆς λέξεως) is unworthy of Plato (1.87.6-15).

Longinus' views on the effectiveness of purely stylistic devices can be seen also in the introduction to the section on diction in the *Art of Rhetoric* (F15b, 186.15-188.2), a passage which (as we have already noted) contains a striking parallel to L's image of style as illumination. Kaibel mockingly cites some of the recommendations on diction (that one might, for example, consider using in place of παίζεις the periphrastic παίζεις ἔχων, or instead of the commonplace ἀηδὲς the less familiar ἀγλευκὲς, ἀτερπέες or οὐκ ἐν χάριτι: F15b, 189.14-16, 190.18-20)⁸³ to illustrate Longinus' triviality by comparison with L: 'Wenn der gute Longin sich von so harmlosen Narkotika so gewaltige Wirkung verspricht, so hat er jedenfalls von seiner Kunst eine wesentlich andere Vorstellung als der Verfasser *Περὶ ὕψους*.'⁸⁴ Kaibel seems to have forgotten that L is someone for whom success in achieving sublimity may depend on the choice between ὥσπερ, ὡς or ὥσπερὶ (39.4), and who is distressed by Herodotus' use of the word ἐκοπίασεν

⁸¹ Kleve 1980, 72.

⁸² *περὶ ἀρχῶν* and *φιλόσοφος*: I agree with Armstrong 1960, 394 against Brisson and Patillon 1994, 5255 in taking the *φιλόσοφος* as a philosophical rather than a literary study. Since Longinus regarded Plotinus' views on the Forms as a departure from Plato's doctrine the title may play on words, denoting a defence of the classical (*ἀρχαῖος*) doctrine of first principles (*ἀρχαί*). The adoption of a primarily exegetical approach to the problem would explain Plotinus' *bon mot* (which was not original: cf. *Sen. Ep.* 108.23, with Whittaker 1987, 120).

⁸³ *παίζεις ἔχων* (cf. *Theocr.* 14.8) was a regular illustration of the Attic periphrasis: Lucian *Icaromenippus* 24, *Soloecista* 1; sch. Lucian 136.25-7 Rabe; *Lib. Ep.* 14.1; Porph. *QH* 112.13-19 Sodano; Eust. *In Il.* 1.31.317 van der Valk. Longinus takes his own advice regarding ἀγλευκὲς (cf. Xen. *Hiero* 1.22) at 195.15f.; cf. Hermog. *Id.* 296.9, 410.16; Philostr. *VA* 4.39; and the demented Atticist of Lucian *Lexiphanes* 6.

⁸⁴ Kaibel 1899, 118.

(43.1). This is a good example of the astonishingly selective way in which *On Sublimity* is sometimes read.⁸⁵

6.2 Homer's sublimity

The analysis of the opening sentence of *Timaeus* is not the only evidence for Longinus' interest in literary sublimity. Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus* (F10f = 1.63.24-64.7) also reports how Longinus and Origen were exercised by Plato's comments (*Timaeus* 19d) on the inability of both ancient and contemporary poets to celebrate a society like that described the *Republic*: is even Homer included in this judgement?⁸⁶ Origen insisted on Homer's adequacy to the task:

τίς γάρ Ὅμηρου μεγαλοφωνότερος, ὃς καὶ θεοὺς εἰς ἔριν καὶ μάχην καταστήσας οὐ διαπίπτει τῆς μιμήσεως, ἀλλ' ἄρκει τῇ φύσει τῶν πραγμάτων ὑψηλολογούμενος;

Who is more magniloquent than Homer, who when he puts the gods themselves into strife and combat does not fall short of the imitation, but is equal to the nature of the events in the sublimity of his language?

One thinks at once of L's remarks (9.6f.) on the battle of the gods. Longinus' view is not reported separately, so on this point we may infer that he agreed with his teacher; but the somewhat comical description⁸⁷ of Origen's efforts to wrestle with the problem ('he spent three whole days shouting and going red in the face and dripping with sweat, saying that it was a big subject and a serious problem') suggests that Homer's adequacy to the task seemed less problematic to him than it did to Origen. Longinus' own pupil Porphyry (1.64.7-11) took a different view. He denies that Homer is able to portray the intellectual freedom from passion (ἀπάθεια) that is characteristic of the philosophical life; but he is willing to concede that 'Homer is capable of attaching grandeur and sublimity to emotions, and of raising actions to imaginative magnificence' (μέγεθος μὲν πάθει περιθεῖναι καὶ ὕψος Ὅμηρος ἱκανὸς καὶ εἰς ὄγκον ἐγεῖραι φανταστικὸν τὰς πράξεις). We may note in the positive side of Porphyry's characterisation of Homer the striking density of terms that play a key role in *On Sublimity*: μέγεθος, ὕψος, ὄγκος, πάθος, φαντασία. We have, then, some evidence of a convergence in interests, in terminology and in doctrine, between L and Longinus.

⁸⁵ Compare (e.g.) Sedgwick 1948, 197: after identifying as typical characteristics of the best Greek literary criticism 'minute attention to detail, complex technical analysis, an ear susceptible to the subtlest nuances of verbal harmony, sensitive to every refinement of rhythm', he continues: 'there is nothing of this in L.'

⁸⁶ The relevance of this passage to discussion of *On Sublimity* was noted by Sheppard 1980, 20f.; Russell 1989, 326. Longinus' bibliography in the *Suda* (F1a) includes a work on whether Homer was a philosopher; compare Maximus of Tyre *Or.* 26. For other attested discussions of the relationship between Plato and Homer see Weinstock 1926/7; Trapp 1996, 149f.

⁸⁷ Proclus attributes this description to Porphyry, but I assume that he derived it in turn from Longinus: see n.77.

6.3 στόμφος

A more complex response to the problem discussed by Origen and Longinus is offered by Proclus (*In Tim.* 1.64.11-65.3), following his teacher Syrianus.⁸⁸ He believes that Plato wishes to distinguish between poetry that is inspired (ἔνθους) and poetry that is the product of human art (τεχνική). Inspired poetry derives its magniloquence and sublimity from the gods; poetry that is merely artistic may achieve a kind of sublimity, but is to a large extent contrived and bombastic (πολλὸ τὸ μεμηχανημένον ἔχει καὶ στομφῶδες).⁸⁹ Plato, then, is decrying the kind of poetry that depends on art, because the praise of his republic needs someone who displays innate sublimity (τὸ ὕψος τὸ αὐτοφύες)—that is, an inspired poet, like Homer.

Proclus' use of the word στομφῶδες ('bombastic') leads us back to Longinus. According to an anonymous commentator on Hermogenes (F21d = *RG* 7.963.17-964.9) Longinus discussed the word στομφῶδες in book 21 of the *Philological Discourses*; there follows an etymological and interpretative note on the use of στόμφοξ in Aristophanes' *Clouds* 1367.⁹⁰ John of Sicily (F21e = *RG* 6.225.9-29) also refers to book 21 of Longinus' *Philological Discourses*;⁹¹ he offers a version of the same note, together with a reference to the tragic fragment which L is quoting when the first lacuna ends at 3.1—one of two passages in *On Sublimity* where we find the cognate term στόμφοξ (cf. 32.7). If John's testimony provides evidence of material shared between *On Sublimity* and the *Philological Discourses*,⁹² and if Longinus was L, then he was re-using some of his own material (as L was willing to do: witness his self-citation at 9.2). But it is perhaps more likely that John has contaminated his source's note on στομφῶδες in the *Philological Discourses* with his own recollection of στόμφοξ in *On Sublimity* (he admits to relying on an imperfect memory for the tragic quotation); so we cannot safely assume a close parallel between the *Philological Discourses* and *On Sublimity*.

⁸⁸ On Proclus' debt to Syrianus see Sheppard 1980, 39-103. Cf. Hermias (also dependent on Syrianus), *In Phaedr.* 97.31-98.2, 98.21-99.9, 122.19-22 146.25-147.6.

⁸⁹ Proclus' example of merely artistic poetry is Antimachus. Longinus' works included a *Lexicon to Antimachus* (F1a = *Suda* Λ645), and he crops up in the discussion of plagiarism at Longinus' dinner-party (F4 = Eusebius *Praep. Evang.* 10.3.20-22). Porphyry (*Life of Plotinus* 7) refers to a companion of Plotinus named Zoticus, a critic and poet who corrected the text of Antimachus and wrote a poem on the Atlantis story. Since Plato admired Antimachus (T4 Matthews = Heraclides Ponticus F6 Wehrli) this interest in him in Platonist circles is not surprising.

⁹⁰ Part of this testimonium reappears in sch. *Clouds* 1367. Kaibel 1899, 113 thought it improbable that the scholion draws on Longinus; but sch. *Clouds* 638c (ὅτι πατήρ μέτρου ῥυθμός) is from Longinus' commentary on Hephaestion (F14a, 81.10 Consbruch). The Aristophanic scholia cite by name authors of the second century AD: cf. Rutherford 1905, 416-34, Gudeman 1921, 672-80.

⁹¹ See Mazzucchi 1990, 190f.

⁹² The theory of Boyd 1957, that *On Sublimity* itself is book 21 of the *Philological Discourses* of an otherwise unattested Dionysius Longinus writing in the first century, can be ruled out: whatever the lacuna before 3.1 contained, it was not lexical and etymological commentary on Aristophanes. The testimonium must of course be seen against the background of intense Atticist interest in the diction of Old Comedy; the *Suda* lists an Attic lexicon among Longinus' works.

Despite this uncertainty, the evidence for Longinus' interest in the word *στομφῶδες* is significant. Russell observes that 'ὄγκος and *στόμφος*... and their derivatives belong to what may be called the earliest stratum of Greek critical vocabulary'.⁹³ But unlike *ὄγκος*, *στόμφος* did not enjoy continued currency in critical usage after Aristophanes. I know of no other example in criticism until Hermogenes, who uses *στομφάζειν* in the passage (247.13) which prompts John of Sicily and the anonymous commentator to cite Longinus; even there it is not used directly to describe a style, but the shape of the mouth associated with sounds appropriate to a certain style. The fact that Syrianus, in his commentary on this passage (39.11-15 Rabe), felt the need to explain *στομφάζειν* and *στομφῶδες* suggests that they were not standard critical terms. It was probably through Syrianus that *στομφῶδες* passed to his pupils.⁹⁴ Proclus' use of it (*In Tim.* 1.64.22) has already been noted; Hermias, in a passage listing criticisms that had been made of the *Phaedrus*, uses the word in summarising its alleged faults of style (τῆ λέξει κεχρησθαι ἀπειροκάλω καὶ ἐξωγκωμένη καὶ στομφῶδει καὶ ποιητικῆ μάλλον, *In Phaedr.* 9.17-19 Couvreur: see Appendix (e)).

One striking piece of corroborative evidence can be found in Gregory of Nyssa's *Against Eunomius*. Gregory repeatedly satirises his opponent's style; he makes ironical use of the language of sublimity for this purpose, and the terms ὕψος, ὄγκος and *στόμφος* are recurrent. In 1.480 he refers to the 'bombastic and impacted' quality of Eunomius' diction: τὸ στομφῶδες καὶ κατεστοιβασμένον τῆς ἐρμηνείας. The only other classical occurrence of *κατεστοιβάζω* is in the assessment of Thucydides' style in the epitome of Longinus' *Art of Rhetoric* (F15a, 212.3 Spengel-Hammer = 88 Gautier). The collocation *στομφῶδες καὶ κατεστοιβασμένον* therefore provides evidence at once of Longinus' influence on Gregory and of the Longinian connection of *στόμφος* and its cognates.⁹⁵

One final point: Hermogenes speaks frequently of grandeur (*μέγεθος*) and magnificence (*ὄγκος*), but never of sublimity (*ὕψος*),⁹⁶ yet Syrianus' commentary pairs sublimity and grandeur (*ὑψους καὶ μεγέθους μετέχειν*, 30.5). The infiltration of sublimity into a context where it did not originally occur suggests that the interest in the concept of sublimity which we have observed in the neoplatonists and in Gregory is distinctive; they are not simply reproducing a critical commonplace. The implication is that a critic with a specific interest in this topic has exercised an influence on the tradition in which they were working. The obvious candidate for the source of this influence is Longinus.

⁹³ Russell 1964, 68 (on 3.1).

⁹⁴ Syrianus claims (2.1f.) to be the first commentator on *On Types of Style*; he is likely to have mediated Hermogenes' stylistic terminology to later neoplatonists (Proclus *In Remp.* 2.8.1-8; *In Tim.* 3.199.29-200.27). On Proclus' rhetorical studies see Sheppard 1980, 117-9, 124-9. Lachares, another pupil of Syrianus, also shows knowledge of Longinus' *Philological Discourses*: see Graeven 1895, 292.3-6, 294.14-35 (F21a).

⁹⁵ Gregory's debt to Longinus is discussed in more detail in Heath 1999, together with the evidence (which is entirely inconclusive) for his familiarity with *On Sublimity*.

⁹⁶ The adjective *ὕψηλός* occurs three times.

6.4 Sublimity and inspiration

Proclus' discussion of the problem raised by Origen and Longinus links inspiration with genuine sublimity. The same connection is found in Proclus' commentary on the *Parmenides* (646.21-31 Cousin):

τὰ γὰρ θεῖα κατ' ἄλλον καὶ ἄλλον τρόπον ἐρμηνεύειν δυνατόν· τοῖς μὲν φοιβολήπτοις ποιηταῖς, διὰ τῶν μυθικῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ ἐρμηνείας ἀδροτέρας· τοῖς δὲ τῆς τραγικῆς σκευῆς τῆς ἐν τοῖς μυθικοῖς ἀπεχομένοις, ἄλλως δὲ ἐν θείῳ στόματι φθεγγομένοις, δι' ὀνομάτων ἱεροπρεπῶν καὶ εἰς τὸ ὕψος ἀνηγμένης ιδέας· τοῖς δὲ δι' εἰκόνων αὐτὰ προθεμένοις ἐξαγγέλλειν, δι' ὀνομάτων μαθηματικῶν, ἥπου τῶν ἐναριθμητικῶν λεγομένων ἢ τῶν γεωμετρικῶν.

Divine truths can be expounded in a variety of ways: by Phoebus-seized poets in mythical language and a somewhat forceful style; by others, who abstain from the tragic trappings of myth but who still speak with a divine voice, in language that befits the sacred and a style raised up to sublimity; and by others, who set out to declare divine truths through images, in mathematical language, such as is used in arithmetic and geometry.

The word φοιβόληπτος (of which Proclus is strikingly fond: he uses it eight times) provides another parallel to *On Sublimity* (16.2): Demosthenes utters the famous Marathon oath 'as if suddenly inspired (ἐμπνευσθεῖς) by god and becoming, so to speak, Phoebus-seized (φοιβόληπτος)'. L's discussion of imitation of the ancients draws on similar imagery (13.2f.): just as, inhaling a divine (ἔνθεον) vapour, the Pythia is impregnated with divine power and utters oracles by inspiration (κατ' ἐπίπνοιαν), so by reading the great classics even those who are not themselves possessed (φοιβαστικοί) become inspired (ἐπιπνεόμενοι) and participate in their ecstasy (συνενθουσιῶσι). Emotion, too, contributes to sublime writing 'as if by some madness and divine spirit breathing out ecstasy (ἐνθουσιαστικῶς ἐκπνέον)⁹⁷ and so to speak possessing (φοιβάζον) the words' (8.4). Longinus uses similar language: the fragment of his critique of the Stoic doctrine of the soul (F8 = Eusebius *Praep. Evang.* 15.21) speaks of poets who 'although they have no accurate knowledge of the gods nevertheless partly from the common conception (ἐπινοίας) of humankind, partly from the inspiration (ἐπιπνοίας) of the Muses, which by its nature moves them to these things, have spoken of them with more solemnity [sc., than the Stoics]'.⁹⁸ Compare the discussion of poetic inspiration in Proclus' commentary on the *Republic* (1.184.25-185.3):

ἐν δὴ τούτοις ἅπασιν τὴν ἔνθεον ποιητικὴν μέσσην ἀτεχνῶς ἰδρῦσθαί φησιν τῆς τε θείας αἰτίας, ἣν Μοῦσαν προσείρηκεν (καὶ ταύτη τὸν Ὅμηρον ζηλῶν...): ταύτης δ' οὖν τῆς πρωτίστης ἀρχῆς τῶν ἐνθεαστικῶν κινήσεων καὶ τῶν τελευταίων ἀπηχημάτων τῆς ἐπιπνοίας τῶν ἐν τοῖς ῥαψωδοῖς κατὰ συμπάθειαν ὀρωμένων ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ποιητῶν μανίαν ἔταξε.

In all this he states that inspired poetry is located precisely between the divine cause which he has previously called 'Muse' (in this respect, too, emulating

⁹⁷ ἐπιπνεόν Morus.

⁹⁸ In the essay on memory (200.19 Spengel-Hammer) divine inspiration (θεῶν ἐπιπνοία) is one of a list of factors contributing to good memory.

Homer...): so between this first cause of inspired motions, and the final echoes of inspiration that are observed in rhapsodes by virtue of a sympathetic effect, he placed the madness of poets.

Applying the language of inspiration to poetry and other literature is by no means distinctive; the Platonic roots of this imagery are obvious (e.g. *Phaedrus* 265b). But the particular vocabulary is not so widespread. φοιβόληπτος, φοιβάζω and φοιβαστικός are uncommon in prose. Plutarch says that Cato ‘as if inspired and Phoebus-seized (ἐπίπνουσ καὶ φοιβόληπτος) foretold in the senate what was to befall the city and Pompey’ (*Pompey* 48), and applies φοιβαστική to a prophetess (*Romulus* 21.2). Otherwise, φοιβόληπτος occurs in Plotinus;⁹⁹ φοιβαστικός in Ptolemy; φοιβάζω in the second-century astrological author Antiochus of Athens, Cassius Dio, Heliodorus and John Chrysostom.¹⁰⁰ The vocabulary is paralleled, therefore, in Plutarch and in later writers; but in none of them is it applied to literature, as it is in L, Longinus and later Platonists. Again, therefore, we find a significant correlation.

Another detail in the passage from Proclus’ commentary on the *Republic* quoted above points in the same direction. Proclus speaks of rhapsodic performances as the final ‘echoes’ (ἀπηχήματα, 1.185.1) of the original divine inspiration. L tells us that he has elsewhere described sublimity as follows: ‘sublimity is the echo (ἀπήχημα) of a great mind’ (9.2). Proclus’ concept of the rhapsode as one of a chain of sympathetic influences stemming from divine inspiration is Platonic (*Ion* 533d-5a), but the word he uses to describe it is not. ἀπηχήμα does appear in the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus* (366c καὶ ταῦτα δὲ ἄ λέγω, Προδίκου ἐστὶν τοῦ σοφοῦ ἀπηχήματα),¹⁰¹ and in two second-century authors, Marcus Aurelius and Vettius Valens. But it leaps into prominence in neoplatonist authors: Proclus uses it fifteen times, Damascius eight times, Simplicius and Olympiodorus once each. The later Greek fathers also use it: Gregory of Nyssa four times, Basil of Caesarea twice, Eusebius and Didymus the Blind once.

6.5 Some further items of vocabulary

In addition to evidence that Longinus shared with L an interest in sublimity, therefore, we have seen a number of indications of a convergence in critical vocabulary between Longinus, L and later neoplatonists. The significance of such lexical evidence is, of course, an open question. The affinities of L’s vocabulary with Plutarch and with Philo have long been recognised, and it is possible that if we had more middle Platonist writings we should be able to antedate the connections identified here. But on the available evidence¹⁰² L’s vocabulary seems

⁹⁹ The form φοιβόλαμπτος is found in Herodotus (4.13).

¹⁰⁰ The compound ἀποφοιβάζω is more common, and occurs in Polybius, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus.

¹⁰¹ See Chevalier 1915, 43-66 on the vocabulary and style (but he incorrectly classes ἀπήχημα as a *hapax*), 106-115 on the date (first century BC?). The word also has a technical sense in the medical writers, and appears in poetic scholia to designate onomatopoeic words (e.g. τήνελλα).

¹⁰² Which is limited not only by survival, but also by accessibility. I have used the TLG’s CD-ROM D as my starting-point for the study of L’s vocabulary, supplemented by a variety of lexica

to associate him with writers somewhat later than the date commonly ascribed to him. Exploratory probes reveal further instances: ἀδρεπήβολος (8.1) is used by Vettius Valens; κατεξανάστασις (7.3) is used by Iamblichus and Eusebius, and is found as a variant reading in John Chrysostom;¹⁰³ συναποκινδυνεύω (22.4) is used by Heliodorus; πρόσχησις (27.2)¹⁰⁴ is used by Marcus Aurelius, Porphyry, Proclus, John Chrysostom and Asterius.

Recalling L's interest in Xenophon, I note that the comparative ἀξιοθαυμαστότερος (35.4) is paralleled only in Xenophon (*Mem.* 1.4.4). There are echoes of Xenophon's vocabulary in the fragments of Longinus as well: εὐμισητότατος (*Cyropaedia* 3.1.9) does not recur until the essay on memory (198.3 Spengel-Hammer);¹⁰⁵ εὐφλεκτος (*Cyropaedia* 7.5.22) recurs in Arrian and the essay on memory (201.10); μυριόλεκτος (*Hellenica* 5.2.18) recurs in the *Art of Rhetoric* (F15b, 190.8), and also in Syrianus, Proclus, Damascius, Didymus the Blind and Aristaenetus. This last example shows that Longinus' fragments, like *On Sublimity*, have elements in their vocabulary best paralleled in neoplatonist and patristic authors; one further instance is ἐναπομόργνυμι, found in the essay on memory (201.16) and in Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, Synesius, John Chrysostom and the scholia to Lucian.

These observations could not bear much weight in isolation. But in conjunction with the more positive grounds for connecting L with Longinus advanced in the preceding subsections (and in the absence of cogent objections to a third-century date) the fact that L's lexicon seems to behave in ways similar to that of Longinus may be significant.

7. Conclusion

The available evidence does not allow a definitive answer to the question of the authorship of *On Sublimity*. I believe, however, that the arguments presented here tilt the balance of probability strongly in Longinus' favour. Pseudo-Longinus is a figure now so entrenched in the scholarly consciousness and so familiar that we can easily forget his purely hypothetical status. But it is extravagantly uneconomical to posit an unattested genius when it is possible to attribute the treatise to a critic who was held in the highest esteem by contemporaries and successors, who is known to have been interested in sublimity and seems to have transmitted that interest to later writers, whose fragments display a number of positive correlations with the treatise, and to whose claim to authorship no compelling objections have been advanced.

Gibbon's journal entry (§4) hints at the way in which thinking about the authorship of *On Sublimity* is likely to have been influenced by prejudices about

and concordances, and by my own reading; but, needless to say, my coverage of extant Greek literature is not exhaustive, and the statements made here must be regarded as provisional. There are lists of *hapax legomena* in Roberts 1907, 191-3 and (modified in light of Russell 1964, 195) Neuberger-Donath 1987 108, but neither list is entirely reliable.

¹⁰³ The adjective κατεξαναστικός appears in Sextus Empiricus and Marcus Aurelius.

¹⁰⁴ Manutius: πρόσχησις P.

¹⁰⁵ The positive is found in [Hermog.] *Meth.* 441.16, dating perhaps to the second century.

late ancient culture. From Gibbon's astonishment that a cultural context held in such low esteem should have produced a work so much admired it was an easy step to Weiske's conviction that it must have been the product of some other context. We have now achieved a better appreciation of the second sophistic and of late ancient philosophy: the era of (for example) Alexander of Aphrodisias, Plotinus, Porphyry, Origen, Hermogenes, Philostratus and Longinus himself was manifestly not an intellectual or cultural desert. If the case argued in this paper is correct, we must take account of *On Sublimity* in reassessing the vigour and creativity of third-century culture; and we may recognise in Longinus the critic to whose greatness contemporaries and successors paid tribute.

Appendix

(a) In the *Art of Rhetoric* Longinus objects to calling the figures of thought 'figures' (F15b, 194.9-13); L takes the conventional terminology for granted (8.1). There is no inconsistency. The terminological point in the *Art* is a device to smooth the transition from the section on diction to that on delivery (194.16-19); in *On Sublimity* it would be a pointless distraction. Longinus refers to figures of thought in excerpt 3 (F16, 213.9).

(b) Excerpt 25 (F16, 216.19-21) quotes the Isocratean dictum that 'the task of rhetoric is to make small things great and great things small, new things old and old things new', of which L is critical (38.2). Again, there is no inconsistency. L does not criticise the principle *per se*, but the enunciation of the principle in an inappropriate context: by proclaiming the power of discourse Isocrates puts the reader on guard against the discourse that follows; concealment is essential (38.3).

(c) Psellus' epitome of the *Art of Rhetoric* (F15a, 211.24-212.6 = 82-90 Gautier) ends with a list of seven authors (Aeschines the Socratic and Plato; Herodotus and Thucydides; Isocrates, Lysias and Demosthenes). This clearly derives from a 'reading list', comparable to those in Quintilian or Hermogenes.¹⁰⁶ There are representatives of three contrasting styles of oratory, supported (as is customary) by selected historians and philosophers.¹⁰⁷ Five of the authors are judged flawless (ἀναμαρτήτους); Thucydides and Plato are criticised. This does not imply hostility towards them: inclusion in such a list is a mark of high esteem in itself (see §6.1). But undeniably there are aspects of these authors' styles which trainee orators would do well to approach with caution. In Lucian's *Lexiphanes* the lecture on the proper route to literary success demands a thorough grounding in the poets and orators before one approaches these two authors (22). A gap between what is commended as a model to students and what is identified in a critical work as the very highest level of literary achievement is no surprise; Dio Chrysostom, having identified Demosthenes and Lysias as the greatest of the

¹⁰⁶ Quint. 10.1; Hermog. *Id.* 380-413 (see Rutherford 1998, 37-53); cf. D. H. *Imit.*, Dio Chr. *Or.* 18.

¹⁰⁷ The selection of Herodotus and Thucydides is inevitable; for Thucydides' faults cf. Hermog. *Id.* 410.2-10. Aeschines the Socratic is recommended in Hermog. *Id.* 406.19-407.7, though less strongly than Xenophon (whose absence from Longinus' list is a puzzle).

orators, recommends the study Hyperides and Aeschines, whose qualities are simpler and easier to grasp (18.11).¹⁰⁸

(d) If ‘faultless’ is taken in the strictest sense, the epitome contradicts L, who identifies faults in Isocrates, Demosthenes and Herodotus. But without a context, it would be foolish to attach significance to this: no critic would describe Isocrates as faultless without qualification, and if ‘faultless’ is implicitly qualified (or if a qualification has been elided in the epitome) the apparent inconsistency disappears. In the case of Lysias the conflict may seem more acute: 35.1, as printed in modern editions, attributes an abundance of faults to him. But the emendation which inserts Lysias’ name into that passage is untenable on other grounds.¹⁰⁹

(e) According to F13 (= Michael Psellus *Opuscula Theologica* 98.30-33 Gautier) Longinus thought Plato inferior to Lysias in the antithetical speeches of *Phaedrus*. Hermias’ summary of criticisms of Plato’s style in the *Phaedrus* (*In Phaedr.* 9.17-19, quoted in §6.3 above) uses the Longinian term *στομφῶδες*, and his phrase ‘overly poetic’ (*ποιητικῆ μᾶλλον*) recalls the reference to Plato’s ‘overly poetic magnificence’ (*ποιητικώτερον ὄγκον*) in the *Art of Rhetoric* (F15a, 212.4-6 Spengel-Hammer = 88-90 Gautier: see §6.1); so Hermias may be reporting comments on these speeches by Longinus. But these criticisms relate to a particular, and particularly controversial, passage in *Phaedrus*; hence Hermias’ response (10.15-22) invokes distinctive features of the context (opponent, addressee and subject-matter). This fragment therefore only singles out as unsuccessful a passage which Plato himself marks as stylistically extravagant (283d, 241e); it does not imply that Lysias is in general superior to Plato, and does not go beyond L’s recognition of faults in Plato’s style.

(f) L’s argument that greatness entails the risk of error (33.2-5) is closely paralleled in a fragment of Pompeius Geminus preserved by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ad Pomp.* 2.13-16). It has even been suggested that L might be Geminus.¹¹⁰ If, however, L is identified with Longinus, an alternative hypothesis suggests itself. It cannot be doubted that Longinus would have been familiar with the work of his great predecessor, and he would have taken an especially close interest in what Dionysius had to say on the question of Plato’s style; so it is likely that he had read the *Letter to Pompeius*, and he might well have seen in Geminus’ argument a strategy for maintaining his own position concerning Plato. The creative use of earlier literary criticism is entirely characteristic of L.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Roberts 1897, 306f., on Caecilius’ preference for Lysias over Plato: ‘Caecilius may well have meant that... Lysias was a safer model for the young student of composition than Plato’.

¹⁰⁹ See Heath 2000; Grube 1957, 371-4 saw the problem, although his defence of the *paradosis* does not convince.

¹¹⁰ Richards 1938; Goold 1961, 172-4. On the parallels in Manilius see Buehler 1964, 98 n.2.

¹¹¹ See Buehler 1964; Heath 1998b, 205 argues that 9.11-15 makes creative use of material preserved in *ΣβΤ Iliad* 24.804.

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