

D. G. BATTISTI (ed.): *Dionigi di Alicarnasso: Sull'imitazione. Edizione critica, traduzione e commento*. Pp. 161. Pisa and Rome: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1997. Paper. ISBN: 88-8147-037-3.

In his letter to Pompeius Geminus, Dionysius gives a short summary of the treatise *On Imitation*, on which he was working at that time: 'The first of these (viz. three books) contains an enquiry into the nature of imitation itself, the second discusses the question of which particular poets and philosophers, historians and orators, should be imitated. The third, dealing with the question of how imitation should be done, is as yet incomplete' (3.1; translation after S. Usher). Imitation ('mimesis') of the old, 'classical' authors is central to Dionysius' classicist conception of literary production, and his many critical essays aim in a very practical sense at showing which authors are worthy of imitation, which qualities in particular should be taken over on the one hand, which mistakes should be avoided on the other. All the more of a pity is it that most of this theoretical treatise on imitation has been lost. The remains—seven fragments of the first two books and an epitome of the second (unfortunately, nothing at all has survived of the third)—have now again been edited and, as it seems for the first time, translated into Italian by Daniela Battisti. The book is an enlarged and revised version of the author's 'tesi di laurea' (p. 7).

In a general introduction (pp. 9–30), B. gives an intelligible outline of Dionysius' conception of mimesis, whose pluralist (eclectic) and creative character is well brought out. However, B. does not discuss Dionysius' position within the classicist movement, and she says hardly anything about the placing (and dating) of the treatise within Dionysius' *oeuvre*. But perhaps the main problem with this chapter is that none of the many contributions to scholarship on Dionysius published after 1991 could be taken into account (not even E. Gabba, *Dionysius and The History of Archaic Rome* [Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1991]). Given the date of publication, this seems rather surprising.

The text and translation of the fragments and of the epitome form the bulk of the volume (pp. 37–97). Unlike the epitome, the fragments are edited without apparatus criticus and there is a commentary on the epitome only. No explanation is given for this uneven treatment. The numbering of the fragments differs slightly from the one in the Belles Lettres Edition by G. Aujac (Paris 1992), but the text is almost identical. B.'s focus of interest obviously lies on the epitome. She has compared some late manuscripts in addition to those taken into account by Usener (Leipzig 1889) and Aujac. But since all these depend on the Parisinus 1741 not much is gained from this procedure. As an editor, B. takes a more conservative line than Usener and Aujac (whose edition she could not—as it seems—take into close consideration), which does not always improve the readability of the text.

The commentary on the epitome (pp. 99–130) contains some sound observations and many useful references, but, again, suffers from the long interval between its writing and its publication. Thus, B.'s readers will still profit from additionally looking at Aujac's short but stimulating introduction and notes. Irritating, too, is the lack of a general discussion of how the discrepancies between the epitome and the long overlapping extract (F 5 B.; 7 Aujac) from Dionysius' own letter to Pompeius Geminus (on which see S. Fornaro, *Dionisio di Alicarnasso, Epistola a Pompeo Gemino* [Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1997], reviewed by Cynthia Damon in *CR* 48 [1998], 288–9) are to be explained. Here, one misses a reference to K. S. Sacks's suggestion ('Historiography in the Rhetorical Works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus', *Athenaeum* 61 [1983], 65–87) that the passage in the *Letter* is not an extract, but the product of a revision reflecting later changes in Dionysius' attitude towards historiography (but see also M. Heath, 'Dionysius of Halicarnassus "On Imitation"', *Hermes* 117 [1995], 370–3, who takes Usener's line that the *Letter* reproduced a draft, the epitome the published version of the treatise).

Scholars working on Dionysius will find some useful information and ideas in B.'s book, especially in the commentary. But the main (and not small) merit of this volume can be seen in making an important theoretical treatise (or what remains of it) of Greek classicism easily accessible to an Italian-speaking audience.

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