In the previous chapter, I have examined Dionysius’ knowledge of the grammatical theory of the parts of speech, in order to establish his place in the history of grammar. But Dionysius did not write grammatical treatises. As a rhetorician, he used the theories of grammarians for his own purposes. His works on style and rhetorical composition offer a unique possibility for us to observe how the two language disciplines that were arguably the most prominent in the ancient world, namely grammar and rhetoric, were integrated into a coherent set of ideas. While the connections between grammar and philosophy in antiquity have been the subject of several modern publications, scholars have paid less attention to the relation between ancient grammar and rhetorical theory.\footnote{For studies on the connections between ancient philosophy, grammar, and rhetoric, see section 1.1.} A rhetorician who focuses on aspects of style can apply the theory of the parts of speech in several ways. Dionysius seems to have used that grammatical theory more frequently than other teachers of rhetoric.\footnote{However, I will compare passages from ‘Demetrius’, ‘Longinus’, Quintilian and later rhetoricians who make use of grammatical terminology (see sections 4.3 and 4.4).} One might say that there are three different capacities in which Dionysius deals with the theory of the μόρια λόγου. As a rhetorician (section 4.3), he regards the parts of speech as the building blocks for the composition of texts. Thus, the description of particular types of composition is partly based on the way in which writers use the parts of speech. The μόρια λόγου are so important that they even figure in the general definition of ‘composition’ (σύνθεσις) at the beginning of the work On Composition. This definition of σύνθεσις as ‘a certain arrangement of the parts of speech’ leads to a doxographical overview of earlier thinkers on the parts of speech. Here, we observe...
Dionysius’ second role: as a ‘historian of linguistics’ (section 4.2), he discusses the early history of the theory of the parts of speech. Finally, as a literary critic (section 4.4), Dionysius discusses the style of Thucydides by analysing the historian’s use of the parts of speech: in this context, the theory of the parts of speech is employed as an instrument for literary analysis.

It is important to realise that Dionysius’ ‘history of linguistics’ is subservient to his ideas on composition and style. In fact, it would be more correct to state that there are only two purposes for which Dionysius needs the parts of speech. On the one hand, the theory of the μορία λόγου offers the rhetorician the starting point for the process of composition, which puts ‘the parts of the phrase’ together as elements. On the other hand, the theory enables the critic to reduce the stylistic particularities of a phrase to the way in which specific parts of the phrase have been used. Whereas Dionysius can indeed be called a rhetorician and a literary critic, his role as a ‘historian of linguistics’ is a very limited one. However, since Dionysius’ history of the μορία λόγου in On Composition 2 is inextricably bound up with the definition of composition (σύνθεσις), I have chosen to discuss this passage in relation to the use of the parts of speech in composition and stylistic analysis. When I speak of Dionysius’ three ‘capacities’, the reader should understand that only two of them are really part of Dionysius’ own intentions, while the third one (that of historian of linguistics) is subservient to the other two. This will be illuminated in the following section.

4.2. Dionysius as a historian of linguistics

*Partes orationis quot sunt?* 3 ‘How many parts of speech are there?’ It is with this question that the Roman grammarian Donatus (who was active around 350 AD) starts his *Ars Minor*. His answer is: *octo*, ‘eight’. Traditionally, we learn that the system of eight word classes, which we find in the works of Apollonius Dyscolus and in the *Technē grammaticē*, was the result of a long cumulative process: Plato identified two parts of speech, Aristotle three or four, the Stoics five or six, and Aristarchus and Dionysius Thrax eight. 4 This presentation of the history of the word class

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3 Section 4.2 has been published in a slightly different form as De Jonge (2005a).