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SUMMARY

Euphonic poetics of Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the possibility of reconstruction of the Greek phonetics

This paper deals with the exposition of the Greek phonetics presented by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the 14th section of his theoretical work *On literary composition*. After a brief summary of the Dionysian euphonical system of the speech sounds, the paper focuses on the question to what extent the exposition can be used for reconstructing the pronunciation of the Greek of Dionysius' time and what we can learn about its variety. We propose that Dionysius described the system of a conservative, even an ultraconservative language. There is a lack of relevant information in his treatise, however. First of all, there is no description of the way the diphthongs should be pronounced, and so it is difficult for us to reach a conclusion concerning this matter. It is not clear why Dionysius neglected the diphthongs. It was probably due to his poor linguistic erudition, and also to the fact that the phonetics of his time was largely determined by the written representation of speech. Moreover, he based his system of the compositional style on the aesthetic intuition, which he did not always verify by a rigorous analysis, so that some phonetic differences escaped his notice. It was probably not Dionysius' aim to restore the pronunciation of the diphthongs on the basis of the conservative orthography, since they were already monophthongized in this period.