

ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΗΣΑΝΤΕΣ ΕΝ ΔΟΞΗ ΤΟΥ ΣΟΦΙΣΤΕΥΣΑΙ: An Enigmatic Depiction of the Second Sophistic in Philostratus and Eunapius' *Lives of the Sophists* or What is Indeed the Mentioned Sophistic?

By Ranko Kozić*

On the basis of evidence obtained by unravelling enigmas in Philostratus and Eunapius' Lives of the Sophists and lifting the veil of mystery surrounding some of the crucial, sophistic-related passages from Isocrates' and Dio Chrysostom's writings, we were able to arrive to a conclusion that, contrary to all expectations, the Second Sophistic is closely connected not so much with rhetoric as with philosophy itself, no matter what the so-called sophists say of the phenomenon in their attempts to disguise the essence of things. Paradoxically enough, it turned out that the enigma in Eunapius and, above all, Philostratus' work played almost the same role as did myth in Herodotus' historical work in so far as only the skillful use of the mentioned stylistic device might confer an aura of magic to the scarce material being at the disposal of the authors.

Keywords: Second Sophistic, Philostratus, Eunapius, legend of Socrates, Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Isocrates, Platonism, enigma, symbolism

Introduction

The phenomenon of the Second Sophistic, as presented by Philostratus in his *Lives of the Sophists*, can best be symbolized by the centaur's painted figure as described in his *Imagines*¹, a figure whose human and equine constituent parts are so fused to each other that the human eye is not at all capable of discerning where one of the mentioned parts begins and where the other ends and what might be considered genuinely human in the centaur's hybrid form. Curiously enough, it is the mentioned author's brief characterization of the exponents of philosophy, commonly regarded as sophists, as *tous philosophésantas en dóxei tou sophisteûsat*², that reminds us of the aforesaid hybrid form, a formulation that assumed characteristics of winged words in the following time periods and thus caused the phenomenon of the Second Sophistic to remain still shrouded in mystery.

Paradoxically enough, even more enigmatic than the above-mentioned characterization is Philostratus' clarification (*VS.*, 484) that he applies the name σοφιστής (*sophistês*) not only to orators whose surpassing eloquence won them a

*Professor, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia.

¹2, 2 (Education of Achilles).

² *Lives of the Sophists* (hereinafter referred to as *VS.*=*Vitae sophistarum*), 479: τοὺς φιλοσοφήσαντας ἐν δόξει τοῦ σοφιστεῦσαι καὶ τοὺς οὕτω κυρίως προσρηθέντας σοφιστὰς ἐς δύο βιβλία ἀνέγραψά σοι, or in the English version by Wilmer Cave Wright: "I have written for you in two books an account of certain men who, though they pursued philosophy, ranked as sophists, and also of the sophists properly so called."

brilliant reputation, but also to philosophers who expounded their theories with ease and fluency, with the mentioned term thus including, implicitly, the exponents of the ancient sophistic and thereby indicating difficulty in the enigma itself in so far as an equals-sign was set between the rival spiritual currents such as sophistic, philosophy and rhetoric, believed to have waged with each other one of the most bitter struggles in the history of ideas in the course of the last four centuries BC³. The fact that the above-mentioned characterization is the least difficult of all the others we encounter in the opening passages from Philostratus' *Lives* speaks to the problem the researcher confronts in attempting to determine the nature of the new sophistic.

Now we focus our attention on other enigmas so as to be in a position to conclude what their function in Philostratus' work is, and will begin by saying that it is closely associated with the author's poetics, which means that unravelling enigmas is a necessary prerequisite for understanding the key message of not only Philostratus but also Eunapius' biographies of the sophists, without which it is hardly possible to adequately evaluate not only the works by the two mentioned authors but also the entire corpus of post-classical Greek literature.

In the opening passages from Philostratus' biographies of the sophists we come across, except for the mentioned one, three other enigmatic formulations laden with meaning and yet highly deceptive, as shown, among other things, by the fact that they play a game of hide-and-seek with the researcher—something that gains in importance all the more since the mentioned game represents the key element of the author's poetics, as we shall shortly see. It is Philostratus' most deceptive formulation that we will start from, and when we say “the most deceptive” we mean by this, above all, the fact that it contributed the most to the mystification of the Second Sophistic as a phenomenon, with the research on the Greek renaissance of the first century thus getting caught time and again in a vicious circle ever since von Arnim's time. In the key passage from the prologue to his *Lives of the Sophists* Philostratus holds the view that the sophistic of his own time must not be called “new”, but rather “second,”⁴ because it is old, simply due

³ Hans Friedrich August von Arnim advocated the view that the content of the notions φιλόσοφος (*philosophos*), σοφιστής (*sophistés*) and ῥήτωρ (*rhétor*) had not considerably changed over time, as a result of which it ended up being basically the same in the period of the late Greek renaissance as it was in the Athens of Socrates and Plato, as can be inferred from the introductory chapter of his work *Leben und Werke des Dio von Prusa mit einer Einleitung: Sophistik, Rhetorik, Philosophie in ihrem Kampf um die Jugendbildung* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1898), 4 ff. In an attempt to prove his thesis, he points to the fact (pp. 77–84) that an almost parallel turning to rhetoric occurred in both the Peripatos and the Academy when headed in the third century BC by Lycon and Arcesilaus respectively, with this kind of innovation in the teaching process being regarded by the author as a decline in the case of Peripatos and a rise, as far as the Academy is concerned. He, moreover, considered Ariston's living word resembling the song of the Sirens to be the culmination of the mentioned process, a song which was, instead of with Socrates, erroneously associated with the sophistic and yet regarded as a convincing proof of its victory over philosophy.

⁴ VS., 481. To tell the truth, the term “second sophistic” was itself in a certain measure disputable to none other than the authors of the two extensive and model monographs on history of Greek literature such as Schmid and Stählin (1981, p. 688) and Lesky (1971, p. 1139), in so far as the mentioned term, according to the latter, leads us astray and, in the view of the former, represents a certain kind of legend with an all too evident tendency concerning Aeschines as the creator of the new sophistic.

to the fact that it represents the same phenomenon as the ancient⁵. Contrary to all expectation, Philostratus will outdo himself in clarifying that paradoxical attitude of his and saying that the new sophistic, unlike the ancient which used to discuss philosophical themes at length discoursing on courage, on justice, on the heroes and gods, on shape of the universe, called philosophy down from heaven and placed it, so to speak, in cities by sketching the “types of the poor man and the rich, of princes and tyrants⁶ and handling the arguments that are concerned” with the historical and civilizational legacy bequeathed to the world by the great personalities⁷. What immediately springs to mind after casting a cursory glance at this short list of themes is the fact that the favourite topics of the new sophistic are also Socrates’ themes of choice, discussed and elaborated at length, above all, in Plato’s *Republic*. The last-mentioned theme, i.e. a lasting historical and civilizational legacy left to the mankind by great personalities, is also laden with meaning in so far as this in itself indicates, though in a remote way, that a peculiar legend has left an indelible mark on the Second Sophistic, as will be seen shortly.

The second of Philostratus’ enigmatic formulations appearing in the prologue to his *Lives* is, so it seems, of even greater importance to us in so far as it points to the problem of the method widely applied by the exponents of the new sophistic in both their public appearances and their literary works. Philostratus (*VS.*, 481), despite maintaining in categorical terms that there is no noteworthy difference between the exponents of the ancient and the new sophistic, contradicts himself when pointing to the essential difference in the methods used by the founders of the old and the new sophistic, Gorgias and Aeschines respectively, a difference expressing itself in the fact that, unlike the followers of Gorgias who handled their themes as they pleased, i.e. trusting in both the inspiration of the moment and the improvisation, those of Aeschines handled them according to the rules of the art of rhetoric. In another passage from the mentioned prologue, Philostratus will attempt in an enigmatic way to eliminate this contradiction, when comparing the method of the philosophers to that of the sophists and saying that both are reminiscent of the art of divination, and that the only difference between them lies in the fact that

⁵ It was this very formulation that influenced Gerth’s (1962, col. 725) understanding of the Second Sophistic, as testified by his article “Die Zweite oder Neue Sophistik”, otherwise essentially based on Paul Graindor’s (1930, p. ix) attitude, according to which there are no substantial differences between the ancient and the new sophistic, in so far as both of them were essentially characterized by the purely formal element such as rhetoric. The same is true for Kroll (1940, col. 1039 ff.).

⁶ It would be better to use, instead of the wording “the types of the poor man and the rich, of princes and tyrants” we encounter in Wilmer Cave Wright’s translation, what seems to be a more accurate formulation, such as “social classes of the poor and the rich and the mindset of the princes and the tyrants”. The English version of this and all other passages from Philostratus and Eunapius is borrowed from Wilmer Cave Wright’s edition of the mentioned biographies (LCL 134).

⁷ *VS.*, 481. It is noteworthy to remark that the expression τὰς ἐξ ὀνομα ὑποθέσεις seems to have been erroneously translated by Wilmer Cave Wright as “arguments that are concerned with the definite and special themes for which history shows the way.” See Montanari (2004) sv. ὄνομα (*ónoma*), where we encounter the meaning of *persona*, i.e., *personality*, fitting in this context.

the philosophical method resembles the prophetic art which is controlled by man⁸, or—one can also say—by *logos*, as distinguished from the sophistic one reminding him of the style used by oracles and soothsayers who give, if I might add, an impression of being *automata*, or rather *channels* through which a deity utters expressions and sentences in a flood of words⁹ in full accordance with the emblematic image of poet and rhapsode in Plato's *Ion* (533d). That interpreting the above-mentioned context in Philostratus' *Lives* through a prism of both the emblematic image in *Ion* and the term *logos*, as expressed in another emblematic image of Platonic philosophy, namely that of the winged chariot in the *Phaedrus*¹⁰, was not off the point is shown below.

We come across the third enigmatic formulation at the very end of the prologue to the biographies of the sophists, where magical power is ascribed to the art of the sophistic, as evidenced by the fact that the Athenians shut the sophists out of the law-courts because of their great cleverness and that the two greatest exponents of the forensic oratory, Demosthenes and Aeschines, pitilessly “branded each other with the title sophistes” (VS., 483) so as to discredit altogether the opposing side in the eyes of the jury. When again in the same context we encounter the fact that in their private life the two great men of the forensic oratory “claimed consideration and applause on the very ground that they were sophists,” as testified by Aeschines' account of Demosthenes boasting to his friends that he had “won over the votes of the jury to his own views” (VS., 484) by using a magical power, we cannot shake off the feeling that what it is all about is yet another among many instances of dichotomy in the opening passages from Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*. What makes this case particularly interesting is the fact that the core of the problem is not so much the mentioned dichotomy concerning the use of the term *sophistes* by both Demosthenes and Aeschines as what is omitted by the author, which is to be regarded as the greatest enigma. Philostratus himself seems to have consciously tried to avoid adducing another, even more important testimony of Aeschines (1, 173) according to which Socrates was considered the sophist par excellence by the Athenian public opinion of his own time. It's just what can lead us to the quintessence of the problem, such as unravelling the key message of Philostratus' *Lives*, which can only be achieved through the decipherment of symbols, or rather enigmas wrapped in the riddle of the arrangement of biographical material in the opening passages from the mentioned work—something that can help us have a clear insight into whose attitude towards the sophistic was adopted by Philostratus.

⁸VS., 481. As a result of Philostratus' attempt to disguise the essence of things, the method of the philosophers is closely associated with the one already applied “by the Egyptians and Chaldeans and, before them, by the Indians, who used to conjecture the truth by the aid of countless stars.”

⁹VS., 481. But when it comes to the lacking presence of rhetoric in this comparison, we ought to bear in mind that the terms *sophistic* and *rhetoric* are often used interchangeably by Philostratus.

¹⁰ 244a–257b. On the interrelatedness of *λόγος* (*lógos*) and *μανία* (*manía*) in Plato's philosophy see attitudes taken by Reale (2000, 231, n. 132): “L'ispirazione e la divina mania sono insufficienti, perché potrebbero al massimo essere portate al livello dei poeti e lasciare privi di scienza e di consapevolezza, le quali derivano dal *logos*. Occorre una mediazione sintetica di queste due forze, che è appunto quello che Platone cerca di fare con la sua filosofia.” It seems that what Philostratus had in mind was nothing other than the fusion of *manía* and *lógos*, as advocated for by Socrates in the mentioned passage from the *Phaedrus*.

The Symbolism in the Arrangement of the Biographical Material in the Opening Passages from Philostratus' *Lives*

While conceiving his *Lives* Philostratus seems to have been faced with an almost extremely difficult, if not impossible, task which consisted in providing quite a common catalogue reminiscent of a brief summary with characteristics of an interesting, exciting reading matter possessing, if we read it attentively, truly magical power in some of its passages. What he says in the very preface with hidden aim to justify a concise narrative in his *Lives*, namely that he will not add the fathers' names in all cases, but only for those sophists who were the sons of illustrious men (VS.,479), speaks clearly about how enigmatic every remark of Philostratus is, which was evidently dictated by the fact that he hadn't at his disposal enough material so as to be in a position to faithfully describe all the phases of an intellectual current which has left an indelible mark on the entire corpus of post-classical Greek literature—a fact which can sufficiently explain his relentless drive and passion for disguising the very essence of things.

The only relatively ample material into possession of which he may have come seems to have covered the time period overlapping with his own age, a period marked by the outstanding figure of Herodes Atticus with his manifold activity being, unlike that of all the other exponents of the intellectual current, presented in more detail (VS., 546–566), which is of additional importance to us, in so far as this detail in the composition of the *Lives* clearly indicates that a section dedicated to Herodes contains one of the crucial messages hidden in it. We shall see somewhat later what this message is since it essentially depends on the symbolism in the arrangement of biographical and not only biographical material in the opening passages from Philostratus' *Lives*, namely on what is either omitted or suggested through barely detectable allusions.

The catalogue, or rather canon of both the properly and the so-called sophists, as presented in the opening passages from Philostratus' writing, is divided into two almost equal parts in which the order that the names appear on the list plays a very important role. The first part, or rather group is made up of the names of the philosophers who expounded their theories with ease and fluency of a rhetorician, whereas the second one is composed mainly of the exponents of the ancient sophistic. The list of the philosopher (VS., 484–492) opens with Eudoxus of Cnidus, followed by Leo of Byzantium, Dias of Ephesus, Carneades, Philostratus the Egyptian and Theomnestus of Naucratis¹¹, with this brief survey ending in a section about Dio of Prusa and Favorinus of Arelate as the seventh and the eighth exponent of the group respectively, to which they should not at all belong, given the epoch of their activity as well as their personal attitudes. The fact that Favorinus was given a place of honour at the very end¹² of the list seems to have

¹¹VS., 486. According to Wright (1952, p. 16, n. 2) he is in all likelihood the academician mentioned by Plutarch, *Brutus* 24, as a teacher at Athens.

¹²This can be explained by the fact that Favorinus' life was full of paradoxes so cherished by the authors of the Second Sophistic, as testified by what he himself said about his life in an ambiguous

been motivated by the author's covert intention to mystify the very essence of things. To tell the truth, there might have been external reasons for putting Dio's name into this group, in so far as activity of all of the group's exponents is, with only one exception¹³, associated with the Academy which also had a strong influence on the teachings of Dio¹⁴. We'll be in a position to ascertain what the real reason is for placing Dio's name almost at the very end of the mentioned brief list only after taking a closer look at the names of the authors classed among sophists in the other "canon" appearing in the opening passages from Philostratus' *Lives*.

The last mentioned "canon" (VS., 492–510), unlike the former, seems at first sight to be more consistent, in so far as it is made up of the names whose relation to the sophistic could be regarded as indisputable, but, on the other hand, what is, as in the previous case, still enigmatic is their arrangement within the group. Thus, the list opens with the exponents of the ancient sophistic who play an essential role in Plato's dialogues and, no less important, in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, such as Gorgias of Leontini, Protagoras of Abdera, Hippias of Elis, Prodicus of Ceos, Polus of Sicily, Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, Antiphon of Rhamnus, Critias of Athens, with this summary representation of facts ending, as in the previous case, in somewhat extensive passages dedicated to both Isocrates and Aeschines and their literary and rhetorical activity. At first sight, we would be tempted to say that this brief list is a true reflection of the theses put forward by Philostratus in the prologue to his work, in so far as the names of the founders of the ancient and the new sophistic, or, in keeping with the author's favourite terms, the first and the second, namely those of Gorgias and Aeschines, appear at the beginning and end of the two canons respectively. But we have already become accustomed to the fact that in Philostratus nothing is what it seems at first sight to be, and that all he says is associated with an enigma or a higher sense. Thus, the mention of Aeschines' name at the very end of the second list seems to represent a curious optical illusion aimed at shrouding the essence of things in magic and mystery. This affords a welcome occasion to raise the question—on what do we base this assertion?

The parallelism of the special places Dio and Isocrates occupy in the two canonical lists referred to above points more than anything else to Philostratus' favourite method of suggesting the essence of things by using hardly perceptible allusions. It is by this parallelism that Philostratus seemed to have admitted in a very subtle way that throughout its history the Second Sophistic had not always been the same phenomenon, as advocated by him in the opening passages from the *Lives*—something that was already announced by his classing one of the major exponents of the mentioned intellectual current, none other than Dio Chrysostom, among the philosophers. If we then add to this the fact that the names of key

and paradoxical manner of an oracle: "Though he was a Gaul he led a life of the Hellene; a eunuch, he had been tried for adultery; he had quarrelled with an emperor and was still alive."

¹³ Philostratus the Egyptian. There is no hint as to his affiliation in Philostratus' cursory remark on his way of living.

¹⁴ Dio's Stoicism was apparently only a facade disguising the true, i.e. Platonic, nature of his "philosophy".

figures in both brief lists, such as those of Dio and Isocrates, are presented in reverse chronological order, we have the impression that Philostratus sought to disguise the very essence of the phenomenon and thus make it possible for it to assume characteristics of both magic and mystic. In order to gain insight into what the mentioned magic and mystic look like, we must adhere to chronological order and first focus our attention on Isocrates so as to be in a position to obtain an answer to the question such as: “whose concept of the sophistic was adopted by the author of the *Lives*?”

Isocrates’ and Dio’s Understanding of the Sophistic and Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*

What we encountered in Isocrates seemed to have made things even worse for us, in so far as it turned out that the mentioned author, like Philostratus himself, applied almost the same tactics of carefully disguising the very essence of things, which is also true for his method, being, though different in form, intrinsically the same as the one successfully used by the author of the biographies of the sophists. Instead of allusions, omissions and enigmatical arrangement of facts, we are now dealing with something reminiscent of Socrates’ own approach as described in Plato’s early dialogues and graphically characterized by its author as both *drunkenness of speech* [μεθύω (*methýo*)]¹⁵ and *dizziness* [ἰλιγγίω (*ilingiō*)]¹⁶ blurring his eyes and, as Krumbacher (1897, p. 764–65)¹⁷ put it, beating a devil’s tattoo in both his own and his audience’s ears at the very moment when a certain ethical notion is being equated with the very opposite as a result of his (i.e. Socrates’) striving to give the universally applicable definition of it, as testified by one of his five attempts made in the *Lysis* with the aim to determine the nature of love, in which the mentioned phenomenon ended up being paradoxically identified with hate itself¹⁸. We feel the same kind of both dizziness in the head and devil’s tattoo in our ears when we ascertain that the terms ‘philosophy’ and ‘sophistic’, otherwise denoting opposite, contrasting phenomena, were used alternately in the self-same meaning¹⁹, even in the same passage from Isocrates’ main work

¹⁵ Plat., *Lys.*, 222b: βούλεσθ’ οὖν, ἐπειδὴ ὥσπερ μεθύομεν ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου, συγχωρήσωμεν καὶ φῶμεν ἕτερόν τι εἶναι τὸ οἰκεῖον τοῦ ὁμοίου.

¹⁶ Ibid., 216c: οὐκ οἶδα, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι αὐτὸς ἰλιγγίω ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ λόγου ἀπορίας ...

¹⁷ With reference to Makrembolites’ novel: “Die Darstellung des Eustathios gehört zu dem Wunderlichsten, was Byzanz aufzuweisen hat; das ist kein style précieux und kein englischer euphuism mehr, sondern in nervösen Windungen aufgeführter stilistischer Eiertanz, bei dem uns vor Augen und Ohren schwindelt ...”

¹⁸ 213a: πολλοὶ ἄρα ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν φιλοῦνται, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν φίλων μισοῦνται καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἐχθροῖς φίλοι εἰσίν, τοῖς δὲ φίλοις ἐχθροί, εἰ τὸ φιλοῦμενον φίλον ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ μὴ τὸ φιλοῦν ...

¹⁹ *Ant.* (= *Antidosis*), 209 (εἰκῆ καταφρονεῖν τῆς φιλοσοφίας); 215 (τοὺς οὐ καταφρονούντας μὲν τῆς φιλοσοφίας, πολὺν δὲ πικρότερον κατηγοροῦντας αὐτῆς); 220 (ὅτι σοφιστῆ μισθὸς κάλλιστός ἐστι καὶ μέγιστος ...); 243 (διεψευσμένοι τῆς φιλοσοφίας).

*Antidosis*²⁰, where his own judicial procedure was, moreover, insistently identified with that of Socrates²¹, as a result of which it appears at first sight not to be possible to discern where philosophy ends and where sophistic begins and what can be regarded as genuinely philosophical in a purely sophistic subject matter, as in the case of the already mentioned pictorial representation of the centaur's dual natures in Philostratus' *Imagines*.

The fact that the mentioned term, i.e. sophistic, was even used in the *Antidosis* to denote the teachings of the Ionian philosophers²² as well as those of the Seven Sages (235) and Solon himself²³, graphically illustrates a deliberate effort to mystify the phenomenon of sophistic, which further complicated every attempt at drawing any meaningful line of demarcation between philosophy and sophistic as expressed in Isocrates' oeuvre. It turned out that the only possible answer to this curious game of hide-and-seek should be based on the assumption that every author, even against his will, reveals the elements of self-interpretation. It was this that actually happened to Isocrates despite the fact that he was desperately trying to remove all traces leading to the basic postulates of his poetics, his worldview and his political course of action. After doing a close reading of the *Antidosis* we got the impression that he "betrayed" himself against his will not only once but all three times, thus providing a precious opportunity for us to have an insight as to what his understanding of the sophistic actually was and how much it differed from that of Dio so as to be able to see a controversial phenomenon of the late Greek renaissance in a new light.

Now it can be said with certainty that Philostratus' enigmatic expression appearing in the prologue to his *Lives of the Sophists*, namely τὸς φιλοσοφήσαντας ἐν δόξει τοῦ σοφιστεῦσαι (*tous philosophésantas en dóxei tou sophsteúsai*), was influenced by the *Antidosis* or, to be more precise, by the mentioned passages in which philosophy and sophistic were equated with each other more and more insistently. If we take into account Dio's disparaging attitudes towards the exponents of the ancient sophistic in confrontation with whom he used a whole series of mocking expressions, we are driven to the conclusion that there is, at least on a superficial level, a breach of continuity on the historical line from Isocrates and Philostratus to Eunapius. What we encounter in Dio's work, namely an interplay between reality and illusion expressing itself, unlike the play we are confronted with in Isocrates and Philostratus, in the enigmatic form of at first glance irreconcilable dichotomies, seems to have made

²⁰ Ibid., 168 (τῆς κοινῆς τῆς περὶ τοὺς σοφιστὰς διαβολῆς ἀπολαύσω); 170 (τὴν τε φιλοσοφίαν ἐκ πολλῶν ἔνομιζον ἐπιδείξειν ἀδίκως διαβεβλημένην); 206 (τῇ τοίνυν φιλοσοφίᾳ φανήσεται καὶ τοῦτο συμβεβηκός); 209 (εἰκότως ἂν ἅπαντες τὴν ἄγνοιαν θαυμάσειαν τῶν τολμώντων οὕτως εἰκῆ καταφρονεῖν τῆς φιλοσοφίας). The fact that in the *Antidosis* Isocrates' art is more often referred to as philosophy than sophistic speaks for itself.

²¹ Ibid., 15: "... although he alleges that I am able to make the weaker case appear the stronger ..." (Cf. Plat., *Ap.*, 19b); *Ant.*, 27: "... for he sees that you are over-ready to accept slanders, while I, because of my age and my lack of experience in contests of this kind, shall not be able to reply to them in a manner worthy of my reputation ..." (Cf. Plat., *Ap.*, 17d).

²² Cf. *Ant.*, 268 where Empedocles, Ion, Alcmeon, Parmenides and Melissus were characterized as "ancient sophists."

²³ *Ant.*, 313: "... who was the first of the Athenians to receive the title of sophist ..."

things even worse in our attempt to decode the poetics of the major exponents of the Second Sophistic, but, despite all this, it will turn out that key postulates of Dio's poetics essentially fit with the trend referred to above, as we shall shortly see.

Before examining more closely the question of the ontological aspect of Dio's poetics apparently characterized by the aforesaid dichotomies, we have to go back yet again to the three mentioned instances in which Isocrates, against his will, betrayed elements of his poetics. The instances are all the more important as they reveal the prime mover of all the spiritual aspirations over the entire time period of the late Greek renaissance. But even more importantly, the mentioned prime mover will turn out to be behind the entire strategic, nation- and state-building project based on a legend launched with the aim to put it into practice much more effectively, as we shall shortly see.

In one and the same narrow context in the *Antidosis* (209–211), we come across three key instances of self-interpretation which help us understand not only Isocrates' view of his own art, but also the relationship between his art and the kindred phenomena such as the ancient sophistic and forensic oratory. What immediately springs to mind is the fact that Isocrates, just like Philostratus himself, looks on the ancient and the new, i.e. his own, sophistic as the same phenomena, with the only differences between them being in his view reduced to levels and methods, which, unlike what was advocated by Dio, can be regarded as an attempt aimed at mitigating the dichotomies. In the above context, we encounter three key expressions such as *pains and industry* [μελέται καὶ φιλοπονίαι (*melétai kai philoponíai*)], *suitable training* [ἐπιμέλεια (*epiméleia*)] and *noble character traits* [καλοκάγαθία (*kalokagathía*)] used by Isocrates to determine his aim and method being now compared to the extremely painful training of the intellect²⁴, conducted by him with the purpose of making would-be adepts of rhetoric acquire full awareness of what is called *epiméleia*²⁵ and thus creating favourable conditions for implanting as easily as possible noble character traits, now equated with *kalokagathía*²⁶ in their souls, with the method itself, in line of the above mentioned evidences concerning Isocrates' understanding of sophistic, being first characterized as philosophical (*Ant.*, 209: *philoponíai*) and almost immediately thereafter as sophistical (*Ant.*, 220: *kalokagathía*).

²⁴ Ibid., 209: “For, in the first place, they know that pains and industry give proficiency in all other activities and arts [ταῖς μελέταις καὶ φιλοπονίαις ἀλισκομέναις (sc. τὰς τέχνας)], yet deny that they have any such power in the training of the intellect (πρὸς τὴν τῆς φρονήσεως ἄσκησιν).”

²⁵ Ibid., 210–211: “... secondly, they admit that no physical weakness is so hopeless that it cannot be improved by exercise and effort, but they do not believe that our minds ... can be made more serviceable through education and suitable training [παιδευθείσας καὶ τυχούσας τῆς προσηκούσης ἐπιμελείας (sc. τὰς ψυχὰς)]....” What it is all about is a concept borrowed from the famous passage from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (4, 4, 5), where Socrates is represented as advocating the view that virtue can be learnt by going through continuous mental exercise and that it is far easier to find a horse and an ox trainer than a teacher of virtue.

²⁶ Ibid., 220. To tell the truth, instead of the mentioned nominal form, the adjectives *kaloi kai agathoi*, are used by Isocrates.

We have thus come into possession of the three key coordinates which can easily be complemented by other ones having great associative potential and, due to that, being capable of providing additionally convincing evidences needed to clarify both Isocrates' understanding of the sophistic and the profound, philosophical dimension of his method, which can explain why the term *philosophy* is so frequently used in his characterizations of his art.

The fact that we encounter the other three coordinates scattered in both the opening and final passages from the *Antidosis* speaks to the importance of the above narrow context in achieving our objectives. The formulation appearing in the opening passages from the mentioned work where Isocrates draws a clear-cut line of demarcation between his art and that of his rivals—with the former handling lofty topics (*Ant.*, 3), and glorifying the power of philosophy (*Ant.*, 10), unlike the latter equated with an all too easy “mental juggling” [τερατολογία (*teratologíai*)]²⁷ and closely associated with soft living²⁸ and pleasures of all kinds²⁹—can be justifiably regarded as a coordinate.

The remaining two formulations, in which Isocrates compares his own method and style with both gymnastics and music, can also rightfully be regarded as coordinates in so far as they give answer to the question concerning the profound philosophy underlying his poetical principles. The first of them can be seen as a clear reflection of the famous passage from Plato's *Gorgias* (464b; 465b), where Socrates is represented as drawing an analogy between beauty care and gymnastics on one side, and sophistic and legislation on the other, as fake and genuine disciplines associated with the body and mind respectively³⁰, so that, in retrospect, Isocrates' identification of his own art with gymnastics can be seen not only as a sign of his faithfulness to the principles of Plato's philosophy, but also as his express ambition to confer nation- and state-building characteristics on his own art (legislation). This gains in importance all the more so when we take into account the fact that the above-mentioned analogy in which an all too easy mental juggling as a method of Isocrates' rivals was equated with a way of living characterized by pleasures of all kinds³¹, is essentially based on Socrates' famous characterization of the sophistic rhetoric in the *Gorgias* as a certain habitude producing a kind of gratification and pleasure³².

The other coordinate belonging to this additional group, namely *music*³³, moves us even closer to our goal such as an accurate description of Isocrates' art,

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 284–285: ... τοὺς δὲ τῶν μὲν ἀναγκαίων ἀμελοῦντας, τὰς δὲ τῶν παλαιῶν σοφιστῶν τερατολογίας ἀγαπῶντας φιλοσοφεῖν φασιν, ἀλλ' οὐ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα μανθάνοντας καὶ μελετῶντας ἐξ ὧν καὶ τῶν ἴδιον οἶκον καὶ τὰ κοινὰ τὰ τῆς πόλεως καλῶς διοικήσουσι. This proves the fact that in Isocrates' time sophistic and philosophy were identified with each other and that Isocrates' understanding of the sophistic was essentially determined by the legend of Socrates as depicted in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, 2, 7, 1; 2, 7, 7–10; 3, 1, 1–5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 286: ... ἐν συνουσίαις καὶ ῥαθυμίαις καὶ παιδιαῖς ...

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 287: especially chilling the wine at the “Nine-fountains” by the Athenian youth.

³⁰ *Gorg.*, 465c: “Sophistic is to legislation what beauty care is to gymnastics and rhetoric is to the administration of the justice what cookery is to medicine”.

³¹ *Ant.*, 280. Cf. n. 28.

³² 462c: χάριτός τινος καὶ ἡδονῆς ἀπεργασίας.

³³ *Ant.*, 47–48: ... οὗς (sc. Isocratis orationes) ἅπαντες ἂν φήσαιεν ὁμοιοτέρους εἶναι τοῖς μετὰ μουσικῆς καὶ ῥυθμῶν πεποιημένους. See among other passages from Eunapius' *Lives of the*

if we take into account the fact that it is in the prologue to the *Phaedo* (61a) that Socrates himself identifies his own way of living with music³⁴, a prologue in which he is represented as having recourse to both the poetic paraphrase of a comical prose model, such as Aesop's fables, and the composition of the sublime lyrics such as a hymn to Apollo with the aim to make an indelible and, so to speak, daemonic impression upon the minds of his followers while fusing the sublime and the comical on the last day of his life. It is in the aforementioned passage that both philosophy and paraphrase are characterized as a music, with the former being identified with the sublime one, as distinguished from the latter regarded as its popular counterpart. We must use yet again one of the coordinates from the first group, namely ἐπιμέλεια (*epiméleia*) so as to be able to ascertain the importance of Isocrates' identification of his art with music to his literary activity.

Epiméleia ("industry" or "suitable training"), along with *sophía* ("wisdom"), represents a key word of Socrates' political testament given in bare outline in the *Alcibiades* where both of them assume characteristics of a daemonic power capable of guaranteeing the victory in any future clashes between the Greek world and its barbarian surrounding, so that it is quite reasonable to say that what Isocrates had in mind was, among other things, such a nation-, state-building and strategic potential of *epiméleia*. This assumption seems to be well founded all the more so since *epiméleia* acquires characteristics of the keyword in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* as well, with *sophía* now yielding place to a more specific term, such as ἐγκράτεια (*enkráteia* "continence"; "self-control") around which as a central axis all other principles of Socrates' philosophy are presented as revolving in the work already mentioned.

It could be said that *enkráteia* became the quintessence of wisdom in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (4, 5, 11–12) since it alone leads to contemplating the intelligible world and what is Good in things themselves, as well as to classifying the latter into both genera and groups and the possibility closely connected with it, such as constantly choosing Good and avoiding Evil in one's own activity. All of this gains in importance if we take into account that the *Memorabilia* could be regarded as a peculiar legend of Socrates, as shown by the fact that the celebrated philosopher is represented in it not only as a true connoisseur of the intelligible world of ideas³⁵ but also as an expert in almost all practical disciplines such as

Philosophers and Sophists the following one (501–502): ὥσπερ οὖν τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ γλυκύτερα τῶν μελῶν πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀκοὴν ἡμέρως καὶ πρῶως καταρρεῖ (sc. Chrysanthius' speech) ... καὶ ... πᾶσιν ἦν ἐναρμόνιος, καὶ τοσαύταις διαφοραῖς ἠθῶν ἐνέπρεπε καὶ καθηρμόζετο, modelled on the *Phaedrus*, 271d.

³⁴ Cf. *Lach.*, 188d where Socrates is characterized as a perfect musician just due to the fact that he "tuned himself with the fairest harmony", by making "a true concord of his own life between his words and his deeds," a quality that recommended him for the role of both educationalist and teacher not only of children but also adults.

³⁵ What is also worth noting in this context is the fact that Socrates is represented by Xenophon as an expert even in an entire field of fine and plastic arts in his conversations with Parrhasius the painter (3, 10, 2) and Cleito the sculptor (3, 10, 5), where *montage* of what was generally regarded as an epitome of artistic perfection is, in contrast to pure invention, openly advocated as the most effective way of achieving creativity in a work of art and, by the same token, one of literature—

military art (3, 1, 1–5), home economics (2, 7), house-keeping (2, 9), doing sustainable business and account-keeping (2, 8), with his solidarity with all the members of the community standing out from the rest for its importance and going so far as to induce him to not only help others with his advice, but also to carry like an athlete their own burden on his back³⁶.

With this we gained a deeper perspective on Isocrates' poetics in so far as it turned out that it adapted almost perfectly to the spirit of both Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades*³⁷ and Xenophon's *Memorabilia* as a legend of Socrates launched at the most suitable moment for putting the mentioned testament's key ideas into practice. Thus, we can see the stylistic and ideational timeline from Isocrates to Philostratus essentially extended in both directions, forwards and backwards, with both Socrates' political testament and Xenophon's legend of Socrates standing at its beginning, a legend that ended up becoming manifest in a later time period covered by Eunapius' *Lives*, whose protagonists were striving to imitate Socrates' life down to the last detail³⁸ with the aim to surpass, among other things, their master's legendary achievement during his military episode in ice-cold Potidea³⁹. Thus, what was carefully shrouded in mystery over the time period of nearly seven centuries and only ambiguously suggested was made known to the world almost at the very end of Greek intellectual history or, to be more precise, in Eunapius' *Lives*, and the reason therefore was not so much an imminent external threat posed by the barbarian invasion but a very dangerous, universalistic-oriented enemy force such as Christian faith⁴⁰ which forced dying paganism into assigning the role of the last bulwark of defence to Socratic, or rather Platonic philosophy in its bitter struggle for preserving its dearly beloved exclusiveness.

Dichotomies within Dio's Oeuvre and the Siren Singing on the Tomb of Isocrates

We are now going back to the issue of Dio's attitudes towards the sophistic which at first sight don't fit with the mentioned trend as expressed in the writings of the intellectual current's three major exponents such as Isocrates, Philostratus and Eunapius. Paradoxically enough, the harsh tone of Dio's polemics against the sophists and their activity seems to speak in support of the above, a polemics in

something that, together with the principles of the new rhetoric given in bare outline in the *Phaedrus* (266b), such as *diareseis* and *synagogai* (analytical partition of the phenomenon and synoptical reduction of the partitioned to a single idea), might have served as an initial basis for developing a theory of literary concept enjoying great popularity in the period of the Second Sophistic, as can be inferred from Lucian's writings *Imagines* and *Prometheus es in verbis* and Dio's discourses on kingship as well.

³⁶ *Mem.*, 2, 7, 1: χρή δὲ τοῦ βάρους μεταδιδόναι τοῖς φίλοις.

³⁷ 123c–124b: καὶ οἶμαι ἂν αὐτὴν (sc. Xerxis uxorem) εἰπεῖν ὅτι οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅτῳ ἄλλῳ πιστεύων οὗτος ὁ ἀνὴρ (sc. Alcibiades) ἐπιχειρεῖ πλὴν ἐπιμελεία τε καὶ σοφία· ταῦτα γὰρ μόνῃ ἄξια λόγου ἐν Ἑλλήσιν ... ὧν (sc. ἀντιπάλων) ἄλλῳ μὲν οὐδ' ἂν ἐνὶ περιγενοίμεθα, εἰ μὴ περ ἐπιμελεία τε ἂν καὶ τέχνη.

³⁸ 482 (Aedesius), 492 (Prohaeresius), 500 (Chrysanthius).

³⁹ Plat., *Symp.*, 220b: ἀνυπόδητος δὲ διὰ κρυστάλλου ῥᾶον ἐπορεύετο ἢ οἱ ἄλλοι ὑποδεδεμένοι.

⁴⁰ Demolition of the temple of Serapis at Canopus in the Nile Delta, as depicted by Eunapius in his *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 472 can be cited as an instance of this.

which Dio spares no effort and, so to speak, no word to label the exponents of the mentioned intellectual current in his fourth discourse on kingship as “ignorant” (28), “tricky fellows” (32), “men attracting only simpletons”, “lecherous eunuchs” (35) and “miserable creatures” (38) so as to discredit them altogether by presenting them as a dangerous, unruly and subversive element. Not even such a tone of disparagement was quite sufficient for Dio to express contempt for the exponents of such educational aspirations, so that he felt the need to adopt Socrates’ favourite method of drawing analogies with the mythical and animal world, with the sophist now being associated not only with the hybrid race of the centaurs (131) as a monstrous brood sprung from Ixion’s embrace of a dark and dismal cloud, but also with the young, untrained and unruly dogs misleading others more experienced in hunting by both barking at random and behaving as if they knew the scent and saw the prey and thus ending up deceiving the hunters and becoming, like their human “analogon”, the very symbol of ignorance and inexperience (4, 34).

Now a crucial question arises: which of the two sophistic movements—the ancient or the new, i.e. that of Isocrates, is a controversial subject of his invective? If we start from the fact that in Dio’s two fairly short “essays” on Homer and Socrates (or. 54 and 55) which are of greatest importance for our understanding of his literary-aesthetical principles, it was the exponents of the ancient sophistic that were placed in a negative light, and then, in keeping with this, assume that they themselves were subject of criticism, in that case his aspiration to cross swords with the exponents of the intellectual current whose legacy had a long time ago lost its relevance, so much so that almost no fire was smouldering under ashes would have seemed a little bit anachronistic. But if, on the other hand, we assume that the fire slowly burning under the ashes could flare up yet again in the first century AD and thus pose a challenge for Dio’s conception of rhetoric, then his furious tirades against sophists can be regarded only as a consequence of his disagreement with Isocrates’ concept of the sophistic which was elastic enough to also include, aside from purely philosophical legacy, that of the ancient sophistic, something that was unacceptable to him, at least as far as the latter is concerned⁴¹. Thus, we arrive to a conclusion that Dio’s tirades were aimed at his contemporaries who—most likely under the influence of Isocrates—continued to strive to apply the concepts of the old sophistic to their writings despite the fact that they were not well grounded in philosophy, which can rightfully be regarded as calling into question Isocrates and, by the same token, Philostratus’ conception of the sophistic, which is why Dio was, as already seen, classed among philosophers⁴² in Philostratus’ *Lives*.

⁴¹Dio’s contemporary Plutarch took similar attitudes towards the sophists of his own time in his writing *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* (*De audiendis poetis*: 43f; 48d) where the exponents of the mentioned intellectual current are identified with the popular lecturers and superficial persons bent on acquiring mere information respectively, which allows us to conclude that what Dio had in mind was just this kind of knowledge.

⁴²This can also be explained by the lack of the baffling enigma in the writings of Dio’s maturity, which is, to an even greater degree, also true for Lucian, who was not even mentioned in Philostratus’ register of the sophists, most likely owing to the fact that, aside from *The Dead Come to Life or the Fisherman* (*Piscator*), *The Hall* (*De domo*) and *To One who Said ‘You’re Prometheus*

In the preceding section we expressed the view that, despite all this, Dio's attitudes fitted into the new concept of sophistic as advocated by Isocrates, and now we shall see the reason therefore. The answer will be given by Dio's two already mentioned fairly short "essays" (or. 54 and 55) extolling Socrates' style (or. 54) and highlighting close affinities between Homer and Socrates (or. 55). The former culminates in the curious paradox that "the words of Socrates, for some strange reason, still endure and will endure for all time, though he himself did not write or leave behind him either a treatise or a will"⁴³ unlike the writings of the sophists, nothing of which had remained but their name alone, despite the fact that they won such admiration and were carefully written down, which can, in Dio's view, be explained by their authors' base motives to make money and please simpletons and fools (or. 54, 1–2). In the latter in which close affinities between Homer and Socrates are advocated⁴⁴, we come across a magic formula, otherwise intended to be kept secret in the whole time period in which the Second Sophistic existed as an intellectual current, and what is referred to here is a fusion of Homeric imagery and the Socratic or Platonic concept, which can be described as a two-way process, be it that the Platonic concept ended up being condensed and reduced to the form of a Homeric image, or be it that the latter was further elaborated so as to assume characteristics of the former.

In the second-mentioned "essay" Dio himself disproves the arguments first set forth by both Philostratus and Synesius and subsequently used by the scholars in an attempt to justify setting up dichotomies within his oeuvre—something that went largely unnoticed in previous research on the subject. A striking similarity between Homer and Socrates is, in Dio's view, well explained by the seemingly trivial analogies with starlings, daws, locusts, a firebrand, ashes, beans and chickpeas, being, simply due to their educational function, at least of the same, if not even greater, importance in Homer's work as the similes with the almighty creatures of both wild life and myth, such as lions and eagles or Scylla and Cyclopes (or. 55, 10), and this is, aside from the fusing of myth, history and fable⁴⁵ with each other, also true for Socrates' living word characterized by an amazing mixture of the serious and the laughable (or. 55, 11). We can rightly assume that these two short "essays" on Homer and Socrates stand for the author's self-interpretation in so far as Dio, following the example already set by Socrates, says things closely related to his poetics in a roundabout way while expounding his views on the mentioned authors' stylistic features⁴⁶. Synesius himself seems to have deliberately overlooked these two instances of Dio's self-interpretation so as

in *Words* (*Prometheus es in verbis*), he made publicly known key elements of his poetics in his literary canons appearing in *The Dance* (*De saltatione*), *Lexiphanes* and *Essays in Portraiture* (*Imagines*).

⁴³Or., 54, 4. The English version of this and all of the following passages is borrowed from H. Lamar Crosby's study edition of Dio's discourses (LCL).

⁴⁴Or., 55, 9 where the author points to striking similarities between Socrates and Homer, as testified by the fact that "they both were devoted to the same ends and spoke about the same things" through different media such as those of verse and prose.

⁴⁵The fable (*fabula*) is, so it seems, implicitly present in Dio's formulation.

⁴⁶Cf. n. 35. Brancacci (1992, p. 3316) uses the term *lógos Sokratikós* in order to prove his theory of Dio's being inspired by the reflection which Socrates' living word found in Antisthenes.

to be in a position to fabricate the thesis according to which Dio was a sophist in his early period⁴⁷, only to recant these youthful beliefs and become a philosopher in the years of his maturity by handling what was usually classed among purely rhetorical subjects “no longer as a rhetorician but rather like a statesman”⁴⁸. In line of the above mentioned evidences, we can rightly assume that Dio handled even the trivial topics such as encomia on gnat, parrot⁴⁹ and hair like a statesman, as can be inferred from the fact that the last mentioned one, otherwise preserved in Synesius’ own encomion on baldness, might be characterized as a short “essay” on the cultural phenomenon, such as wearing long hair by Spartan youth, rather than a sophisticated writing, at least judging by the deep impression it made on Synesius while he was reading it over and over again. What Synesius seems to have been attracted to was much rather Dio’s writings dealing with the minor topics than his state-building discourses simply due to the former’s allusion-and enigma-related features. All this points to the fact that in the period of the Second Sophistic both the enigmatic and the allusive were of the same, if not greater, importance as the serious in the writings characterized as nation- and state-building. Almost total absence of the baffling enigma in the writings of Dio’s maturity as well as his irreconcilable attitudes towards the ancient sophistic was, as already seen, the main reason for which Dio was classed among philosophers in Philostratus’ *Lives*.

The symbol laden with meaning we encounter at the very beginning of Philostratus’ brief account of Isocrates’ style and literary activity speaks volumes about the nature of the Second Sophistic. What is referred to here is the sculpture of the Siren standing on the tomb of Isocrates with her pose being that of one singing. To sum up, the very fact that the Siren is associated with Isocrates seems at first sight to be a little bit odd if we take into account the emblematic scenes in the opening passages from Alcibiades’ discourse in the *Symposium* (215e) where Socrates’ speech is compared not only to the song of the Sirens but also to the rhythms of the corybantic élan⁵⁰, with Alcibiades being by his own admission unable to hold back his tears gushing forth at the sound of Socrates’ speech more profusely than is the case for Corybants when in a state of wild fanaticism. If we take into account another fact as well, such as the one we encounter in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* (3, 11, 16–17), where Socrates’ art of speaking was compared to the potions (φίλτρα–*phíltra*), spells (ἐπωδαί–*epodai*) and magical wheels, i.e. ἰγγες (*inyges*) as well as, albeit implicitly, to the song of the Sirens (2, 6, 16), we might be tempted to think of Isocrates’ attempt to identify with Socrates and make the latter’s emblematic stylistic features his own as utterly uninventive. But yet again appearances are deceptive.

⁴⁷ Synesius, *Dio in Testimony regarding Dio’s Life and Writings* [re-edited in the fifth volume of H. Lamar Crosby’s study edition of Dio’s discourses (LCL)], p. 368.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 372.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: ...φησί (sc. Philostratus) ... σοφιστοῦ γὰρ εἶναι μηδὲ τούτων ὑπεριδεῖν.

⁵⁰ Socrates himself uses the terms συγκορυβαντιῶν (*synkorybantiôn*) and συμβακχεύων (*symbakcheúon*) in *Phaedr.*, 228b and 234d respectively to describe his passion for the discourses on love and friendship.

In order to be able to ascertain what exactly the Siren singing on the tomb of Isocrates symbolizes, we must yet again take into consideration the enigmatic arrangement of biographical material in the opening passages from Philostratus' *Lives*, passages that are, as already seen, characterized by telling ellipses, omissions and, so to speak, disguise of every sort. The mutual substitution of the places occupied by Isocrates and Aeschines within a brief list of the sophists of an earlier period could be regarded as the most illustrative example of disguise as a device in Philostratus' narrative, a substitution that seems to have been created with the aim to give the false impression of Aeschines as being the founder of the intellectual current known as the Second Sophistic. The very fact that Philostratus (*VS.*, 503) links Isocrates' art closely to the dance by using the term κρότος (*krótos*) for his eloquence, previously almost exclusively applied to Socrates' living and breathing word, helps us get closer to the solution to the enigma. It is now quite clear that what it is all about is the initial stage in an undertaking aimed at putting key ideas of Socrates' political testament into practice, a stage in which both Xenophon, as Socrates' disciple, and Isocrates, as the rhetorician on whom Socrates' hopes were pinned in the *Phaedrus* (279a–b), had been given a leading role when it comes to the transformation of rhetoric from a counterfeit art and beguiling habitude to the discipline of nation- and state-building importance, with both launching the legend of Socrates (Xenophon) and using stylistic devices in one's own narrative with the aim to make it resemble, at least from afar, the song of the Sirens (Isocrates), being a necessary prerequisite for such a curious undertaking.

The sculpture of the Siren singing on the tomb of Isocrates turned out to be a specific symbol of the new sophistic which has been thus far, primarily due to Philostratus' cunningly constructed phraseology, erroneously associated with the old one—something that was, among many other works, reflected in Erwin Rohde's classical monograph (1914³) with far-reaching negative consequences as far as subsequent research phases are concerned⁵¹. Thus, we are in a position to rectify Philostratus' basically correct statement according to which the new sophistic does not bring something new, in so far as we now know almost for certain that its mission was to propagate not the legacy of the ancient sophists, but that of Socrates, i.e. his style and method and, above all, his living and breathing word.

The Beauty of the Enigma in Eunapius

Enigma as a stylistic device points to the interrelatedness of Philostratus and Eunapius' *Lives*, so much so that any attempt at disregarding the testimonies appearing in anyone of the above mentioned works had to end up being fatal, as in the case of Rohde (1914³, p. 386)⁵² who, due to his methodological shortcomings, ignored Eunapius' writing because of its alleged barbarian nature. As distinguished

⁵¹ Especially the famous chapter "Die griechische Sophistik der Kaiserzeit" wrongly believed to be the only part of his monograph having stood the test of time. None other than Reardon (1971) can be adduced as a telling example of just how fatal relying on the representation of the phenomenon in Rohde was.

⁵² "Gewiß ist, daß die sophistischen Studien in Athen ... eine Art von letzter Nachblüte erlebten, welche ... in den Sophistenbiographien des Eunapius auch ihrem äußeren, schon stark barbarisierten Wesen nach klar erkenntlich sich darstellt".

from Philostratus in whose *Lives* we come across enigma applied to a broader plan, as expressed in the general composition of his work, arrangement of biographical material and ellipses, the mentioned stylistic feature becomes even more intriguing in Eunapius, since it is essentially based on the further elaboration of detail borrowed from his models. To tell the truth, Eunapius was compelled to adopt this kind of approach simply due to the fact that the shroud of mysteries surrounding the Second Sophistic as an intellectual current from its very inception had to be unwrapped under pressure of events, such as the irrepressible penetration of the Christian faith into the Greek living space, so that he was left with the only path to follow, as expressed in his driving passion to develop further what he found in the archetype so as to make it possible for it to assume characteristics of both magic and mystic. Two episodes from Iamblichus' life as depicted by Eunapius (458–459) speak volumes about the author's use of enigma, acquiring truly magical powers, as exemplified below.

What is referred to here is a description of Iamblichus' divinatory power, which can be regarded as a clear reflection of the attitudes taken by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (1, 4, 17–18) where he is represented as constantly advocating the importance of divination in the life of both the individual and the society. Both episodes from Iamblichus' life, as narrated by Eunapius, are, moreover, closely connected with Socrates himself so that it appears to be justified to say that Iamblichus and, by the same token, Eunapius follows after Socrates and walks in his footsteps as if he were a god in full accordance with his famous parainesis in the *Phaedrus*⁵³ essentially based on Homeric verse (*Od.*, 5, 193).

The first-mentioned episode conveys the impression of Iamblichus' striving to resemble Socrates, since he is represented as suddenly being lost in thought with his voice cut off and his eyes steadily fixed on the ground in the midst of conversations with his disciples returning to the city after the sacrificial rites had been duly performed in one of his suburban villas—something that was followed by his immediate suggestion to his friends to go by another road because the dead body had lately been carried along that way, which most of his disciples were unwilling to believe in and continued to go by the same road, only to be afterwards convinced of the truthfulness of his words by inquiring of those whom they encountered coming back from the funeral. Transposition of the motif of Socrates' going into ecstasy and becoming immovable⁵⁴ immediately before his arrival at the banquet already unfolding in Agathon's house to a diametrically opposed context such as a funeral, namely a topos we often find in Greek literature⁵⁵, speaks volumes about his inclination to further elaborate on the concepts found in his

⁵³ 266b–c: ἐάν τε τιν' ἄλλον ἠγήσωμαι δυνατὸν εἰς ἓν καὶ ἐπὶ πολλὰ πεφυκόθ' ὄραν, τοῦτον διώκω κατόπισθε μετ' ἵχνιον ὥστε θεοῖο.

⁵⁴ Plat., *Symp.*, 174d–175c. In comparison, it is worth mentioning that W. C. Wright regards it as an echo of the *Phaedo* 64b.

⁵⁵ See among other works Philostratus' *Imagines* 2, 10 (Kassandra), modelled on *Odyssey*, 11, 472 ff., the opening scene of Heliodorus' novel, Lucian's satirical writing *The Carousal or the Lapiths* (*Symposium*) as well as the frequent turning of what is called the symposium of happiness into that of misfortune in Prodromus' novel *Rhodanthe and Dosikles* 8, 232–241; 8, 391–396; 8, 470–479; 9, 390–394.

models. Paradoxically enough, what closely connects both episodes in Eunapius' life of Iamblichus is none other than Agathon himself. We shall now see the reason therefore.

In the second episode Iamblichus' theurgical powers are depicted in the milieu of warm baths in Gadara comprising, among other things, two hot springs from the depth of which he called forth one after another two boys named Eros and Anteros by uttering a brief summons, with the former being represented as a white-skinned lad with golden locks and shining breast, unlike the latter, whose "hair was darker and fell loose in the sun". We can rightly assume that the breast of Anteros was of the same nuance as his hair, i.e. dark, as a consequence of his long exposure to the sun—a fact which Eunapius left unsaid. What we are dealing with here is a barely perceptible visualization of the key message of Agathon's discourse in the *Symposium* (196a)—in which Eros is represented as a being of fit proportion and, like water, pliant of form and therefore able to fold himself about every man in every way, as a result of which he steals in and out of every soul so secretly, after previously enchanting it—as well as a carefully controlled interweaving of concepts of Eros' dual natures, as expressed in Pausanias (180c–e) and, above all, Socrates' discourse in the *Symposium* (203b–e). The episode itself ends in an amazing way with both Eros and Anteros embracing Iamblichus and clinging to him as though he were their real father, and this, though in a roundabout way, says it all about the so-called sophists' strong, lifelong attachment to the legend of Socrates.

Concluding Thoughts

On the basis of evidence found, except Philostratus and Eunapius' *Lives*, in Xenophon, Isocrates and Dio Chrysostom, we can see that, contrary to all expectations, the Second Sophistic is closely connected not so much with rhetoric as with philosophy itself, i.e. with the legend of Socrates, no matter what its exponents say of the phenomenon in their attempts to disguise the essence of things. We can also see how the legend of Socrates gradually developed from the central principles of the political testament in the *Alcibiades* by first expressing itself in a hidden, enigmatic manner in the initial period of the Second Sophistic roughly coinciding with the two first centuries AD, with the entire shroud of mysteries surrounding it for centuries being finally unwrapped under pressure of events, such as the irrepressible penetration of the Christian faith into the Greek living space in the last period of the Second Sophistic covered by Eunapius' *Lives*. In the biographies of the sophists, enigma had, apart from a purely political, strategic function, a poetic one as well, as evidenced by the fact that it was used as the most suitable means to help the historical and biographical narrative assume characteristics of magic and mystic. It could be said that the enigma in Eunapius and, above all, Philostratus' writing plays almost the same role as does myth in Herodotus' historical work, in so far as only the skillful use of the mentioned stylistic device might confer an aura of romantic mystique to the scarce material at the disposal of the authors. What Philostratus (564) says about the style of Herodes

Atticus comparing it to “the gold dust shining beneath the waters of a silvery eddying river” speaks volumes about the method used by the biographers.

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