

Rohde's Theory of Relationship between the Novel and Rhetoric and the Problem of Evaluating the Entire Corpus of Post-Classical Greek Literature

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The one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the first publication of Rohde's monograph on the Greek novel is drawing near, affording a welcome occasion to raise the big question as to what remains of it today, all the more so since the ancient novel, due to his classical work, has become a major area of research. The aforesaid monograph, considered to be one of the greatest scientific achievements of the nineteenth century, can be justifiably used as a litmus test for ascertaining how efficient the methods hitherto employed were or, in other words, whether we are entitled to speak of continuous progress in research or the opposite is true. Finally, the questions raised in the monograph will turn out to be more important than the results obtained by the author, in so far as the latter, based on his unfinished theses, proved to be very harmful to evaluating both the Greek novel and the entire corpus of post-classical Greek literature. In this paper we focus our attention on two major questions raised by the author such as division of the third type of narration in the rhetorical manuals of classical antiquity and the nature of rhetoric, as expressed in the writings of the major exponents of the Second Sophistic so as to be in a position to point to the way out of aporia, with the preliminary remark that we shall not be able to get a full picture of the Greek novel until the two remaining big questions posed by the author, namely the role played by both Tyche and women in the mentioned genre, are fully answered.

Introduction

In many respects, Rohde's famous monograph *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*¹ can be regarded as a classic example of what is referred to as a scientific work par excellence because, among other things, some of its key theses, such as the one on the relationship between the novel and the so-called sophistical rhetoric,² seemed to have stood the test of time for almost a century and a half since they first saw the light of day—a fact which clearly demonstrated their

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1. The first edition appeared in 1876 with a second one ensuing in 1900; the third, with an important appendix by W. Schmid, was printed in 1914 and reprinted in 1960. Hereinafter referred to as Rohde, *Der griechische Roman*.

2. What is referred to here is the third chapter entitled *Die griechische Sophistik der Kaiserzeit* (310-387).

relevance³ for the present research. That's one of the reasons why in the eyes of many Rohde's theoretical construct assumed characteristics of a structure of colossal proportions, erected on solid foundations and built of earthquake resistant and explosion proof materials so as to be well-equipped to take the full brunt of shock waves⁴ without suffering greater damage.

Two starting points of Rohde's theory, as reflected in his theses on both the division of narration ('statement of facts') in the grammatical and rhetorical manuals and the stylistic tendencies expressing themselves in the period of the Second Sophistic (quite rightly deemed crucial for our understanding of the Greek novel), might justifiably be regarded as a kind of fuse added in the foundations and walls of his theoretical construct.

While confronted with Rohde's comprehensive approach to the phenomenon, as testified by his evident effort to supplement the already wide range of primary sources with complementary material borrowed from the field of archeology, ethnology, history of art and painting, we cannot shake off the feeling that he carried out a detailed and thorough analysis of the phenomenon which, for precisely this reason, assumed characteristics of the mentioned monumental edifice with its huge, imposing blocks, seemingly in perfect harmony with each other.

The problem arose when small, "despised" details with the destructive power of dynamite came into play, as a result of which Rohde's theoretical construct, no matter how reliable its starting points were, was levelled to the ground, with only one of its cornerstones having,⁵ as commonly accepted, remained in place as something to be reckoned with in future research. Before giving our due consideration to the mentioned cornerstone, we shall, because of the complexity inherently present in the methodological approach to the phenomenon, first concentrate on the detail due to which Rohde's attempt to shed light on *drama* and *plasma* as a genre-designation⁶ of the Greek novel by using evidence found in

3. Rohde's theory of relationship between the novel and rhetoric was regarded by none other than Eduard Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa, von VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (Stuttgart und Leipzig: Teubner, 1915), 275 as almost flawless: "Ich brauche darauf (sc. das Inhaltliche der Deklamationen) nicht näher einzugehen, da alle in Betracht kommenden Einzelheiten besonders von Rohde mit solcher Meisterschaft dargestellt und zu einem großen Bilde zusammengefaßt sind, daß ich nichts hinzufügen habe."

4. Metaphor borrowed from Giuseppe Giangrande, "On the Origins of the Greek Romance: The Birth of a Literary Form," *Eranos* 60 (1962), 132.

5. That was not, as asserted by Giangrande in his excellent study "On the Origins of the Greek Romance", 125, Alexandrian love elegy.

6. Appearing for the first time in the mid Byzantine period (9th century) or, to be more precise, in Photius' *Bibliotheca*, only to reappear for the second and the last time three centuries later in Makrembolites' novel *Hysmine and Hysminias*, a genre-designation that was otherwise equated with the so-called fictional, or rather realistic narrative in all the

the ancient theory of narration and, above all, in the definition of its third type in Cicero⁷ and the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*⁸ was doomed to end in failure.

From a technical point of view Rohde got into trouble by losing sight of the key fact that strong evidence concerning both the origins and poetics of the Greek novel could be found in the complicated division of the third type of narrative as expressed in the works of the mentioned Latin authors, only if all instances of the use of *drama* and *plasma* in the Greek novel as well as in the writings of the exponents of the Second Sophistic⁹ were subjected to some kind of hermeneutical analysis. Some of the essential meanings of the above-mentioned genre-designations, such as *subject-matter of myth, symbol, action, aenigma, concept (conchetto), metamorphic states of mind and body, every type of reversal*, especially that characterized by a *happy ending* could have been deciphered only in this way and thus enable us to draw the conclusion that no fewer than three types of subdivision, otherwise based on the criteria of (1) veracity of what is narrated,¹⁰

technical manuals of late antiquity. On other terms such as δραματικόν (*dramatikón*), σύνταγμα δραματικόν (*sýntagma dramatikón*), ἐρωτικῶν δραμάτων ὑποθέσεις (*erotikῶn dramátōn hypóthesis*) used by Photius as the genre terms see Erwin Rohde, *Der griechische Roman*, 376, n. 1 and Carl Werner Müller, "Chariton von Aphrodisias und die Theorie des Romans in der Antike," *Antike und Abendland* 22 (1976): 115-136.

7. Cicero, *On Invention*, 1, 27. It should be noted that the third type of narrative was conceived as a convenient practice, or rather exercise for handling the other two types, such as (1) setting forth the facts before a law court and (2) the so-called incidental narrative in a trial, more advantageously in actual causes.

8. Anonymus, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), 1, 12.

9. See Ranko Kozić, "Δράμα, πλάσμα e μῦθος nei romanzi di Achille Tazio e del Macrembolita e i fondamenti filosofici del genere," *Classica et Christiana* 11 (2016): 123-178, and Kozić, "Die Gattungsbezeichnung 'drama' und der Symbolismus in Makrembolites' Roman," *Classica et Christiana* 13 (2018): 63-148. If our name appears more often here, this is because our attention was focused on certain aspects of literary works, overlooked in previous research on the subject.

10. Karl Barwick, "Die Gliederung der Narratio in der rhetorischen Theorie und ihre Bedeutung für die Geschichte des antiken Romans," *Hermes* 63 (1928): 282 noticed two of them, namely subdivisions based on criteria of veracity of what is narrated [(1) *fabula* = μῦθος (narrative neither true nor probable), (2) *historia* = ἱστορία (an account of exploits actually performed) and (3) *argumentum* = δραματικόν or πλασματικόν (an account of imaginary exploits, which yet could have occurred)] and narrating person (*genus in personis positum* = κατὰ πρόσωπα), whereas the remaining subdivision, i.e. third one, based on the criterion of ending such as a happy outcome (*iucundo exitu rerum*), was detected by Kozić, "Δράμα, πλάσμα e μῦθος nei romanzi di Achille Tazio e del Macrembolita e i fondamenti filosofici del genere," 2016, 123-178, namely a subdivision in which the key elements of both the plot and poetics of the Greek novel, such as never-ending reversals of fortune (*fortuna commutatione*) as well as metamorphic states of mind and body such as austerity and gentleness, hope and fear (*festiuitas ... confecta ex animorum dissimilitudine, grauitate lenitate, spe metu*), also found their reflection. Failing to observe this third type of

(2) narrating person¹¹ and (3) the nature of the ending, were completely fused to each other in the complicated division of the third type of narration, or rather narrative in the above-mentioned Latin authors—something that sheds light on the phenomenon of a happy ending in the plot of the Greek novel, a phenomenon that was regarded by Rohde as some kind of brutal, unpoetic element,¹² due to which the Greek novel, it seemed to him, deserves to be placed at the lowest level on the scale of values, even beneath naive and puerile fairy tales.¹³ This can be explained by the fact that he did not have the slightest idea of how this type of a happy ending might also be deeply founded on Plato's concept of happiness understood as εὐδαιμονία (*eudaimonía*),¹⁴ as expressed at the very end of the myth of the winged chariot in the *Phaedrus*,¹⁵ with polar opposite feelings such as μανία

subdivision was the reason behind the decision taken by almost all scholars to return to Rohde's unfinished theses, which in turn led to a distancing from his right attitude towards the theory of narration found in the mentioned works of the two Latin authors and rightly regarded by him as a fundamental starting point in every attempt aimed at deciphering both the origins and poetics of the novel. The studies of the Greek novel thus ended up getting caught in a vicious circle, as implicitly acknowledged by both Barwick, "Die Gliederung der Narratio in der rhetorischen Theorie," 1928, 287 and Carl Werner Müller, "Chariton von Aphrodisias und die Theorie des Romans in der Antike," 1976, 116, who adopted Rohde's theses, highly disputable though they were, as the only way out of this impasse.

11. This type of subdivision (*genus in personis positum* = κατὰ πρόσωπα) is also threefold depending on who narrates: the author himself (*genus enarratiuum*), or characters acting on the stage (*genus imitativum*) or both the author and the characters (*genus commune*), and as such essentially based on Plato's subdivision of poetry in the *Republic* (329c).

12. *Der griechische Roman*, 307: "... schwächere Dichter tuen vielleicht ganz recht, wenn sie, der oben erwähnten Brutalität ausweichend, ihre Dichtungen nach dem Prinzip der sog. poetischen Gerechtigkeit anlegen, welche nichts anderes ist als eine Sanktionierung jenes Glaubens an die kausale Verknüpfung zweier so völlig geschiedener Dinge, wie sittliche Güte und irdisches Glück sind".

13. *Ibid.*: "In voller Unschuld lebt dieses höchst unwirkliche Prinzip freilich nur im Märchen, welchem (ganz im Unterschied vom Mythos) dieser kindliche Optimismus wesentlich und überall eigen ist".

14. Cf. Friedemann Buddensieck, "Eudaimonie/Glückseligkeit," in *Platon-Lexikon: Begriffswörterbuch zu Platon und der platonischen Tradition* (ed.) Christian Schäfer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007). With regard to the fact that we encounter emblematic concepts of Plato's philosophy widely applied in Makrembolites' novel in the form of barely visible symbols, we can, it seems, rightly assume that the third subtype of division within the third type of narration is, like the other two, also of Platonic origin. However, in Augusto Rostagni's famous study, *Aristotele e l'aristotelismo nella storia dell'estetica antica: origini, significato e svolgimento della Poetica* (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1955), 223 the mentioned subtype of division was, despite all this, closely associated with Theophrastus and the Peripatetic tradition.

15. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 255e.

(sc. erotic *manía*) and σωφροσύνη (*sophrosýne* - *continence*) continuously alternating and complementing each other in the soul of the lover and his beloved¹⁶—something that in the mentioned context was regarded as a guarantee of their happy and blissful life in this world, and, on a purely methodological level, had its tangible parallel with μανία (*manía*) and λόγος (*lógos*) woven into one harmonious and indivisible whole in Plato's own oeuvre.¹⁷

Only in this way, i.e., on condition that the above-mentioned requirements were fulfilled and the Platonic origin of the subdivisions of the third type of narration noticed, can we fully understand quite an uncommon and at first sight somewhat strange definition of what is called δραματικόν (*dramatikón* = *argumentum*) in 11th century Byzantine rhetoric or, to be more precise, in Doxapatres' *Homeliae in Aphthonium*,¹⁸ where the above-mentioned type of narrative is characterized as an adaptation of the subject-matter of poetry aimed at meeting the needs of prose composition in the schools of rhetoric. This was, as will be seen shortly, the definition that, contrary to all expectations, led us without, so to speak, any margin of error to unravelling the riddle called the origins of the Greek novel and its poetics, only on condition that light has previously been shed on the relationship between the *subject-matter of poetry*, or rather *myth* and Plato's style and method.

Thus, all the prerequisites were fulfilled for focusing our attention on the only cornerstone of Rohde's monumental edifice seemingly spared from the blast and still believed to be worth preserving. What we are referring to are his theses on the relationship between the novel and sophisticated rhetoric which many thought were, as an obvious result, protected from all types of shockwave in the future; until, that is, another small, "despised" detail of enormous destructive potential found in Lucian's implicit poetics came into play.

16. The plot of the Greek novel could rightly be regarded as a specific "palingenesis" of the old Platonic myth of the winged chariot, simply due to the fact that the roles assigned to the protagonists of the Greek novel are reminiscent of those played by the dark and white horse in the mentioned famous myth.

17. See Giovanni Reale, *Platone, Fedro: introduzione, traduzione, note e apparati* (Milano: Bompiani, 2000), 231, n. 132.

18. In Christianus Walz, *Rhetores Graeci* (Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, 1834), vol. 2, 201, 10: ... ὡς τοῖς ποιητικοῖς ἀρμόζοντα μάλιστα δράμασι. What is noteworthy is that in Doxapatres' definition *dramatikon* has essentially the same meaning as *argumentum* in Roman rhetoric, namely *subject-matter of poetry*, which was, unfortunately, largely ignored in previous research on the subject. See Charlton Lewis-Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), s.v. *argumentum* as well as *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* s.v. *argumentum*: *materia poetarum aliorumque qui fabulas fingunt ... materia comoediarum et tragoediarum*. On importance of poetry for education of an orator cf. Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, 539 where Polemo is represented as saying that "the works of prose writers needed to be brought out by armfuls, but the works of poets by the wagon-load."

Lucian's Self-Interpretation as the Implicit Poetics of all Authors of the Second Sophistic

Contrary to all expectations, the sudden appearance of the *subject-matter of poetry* in Doxapatres' definition of *dramatikon* had a higher purpose exceeding by far the one usually associated with the expressiveness of a poetic word,¹⁹ as can be inferred indirectly from Lucian's three canons of both distinguished authors and exemplary works of art appearing in his dialogues the *Dance* (*De saltatione*),²⁰ *Lexiphanes*²¹ and *Essays in Portraiture* (*Imagines*),²² which could rightly be regarded as the three instances of self-interpretation to be applied to all the other major exponents of the Second Sophistic as well.²³ We can fully grasp the meaning of the expression *subject-matter of poetry* in Doxapatres' definition only after having ascertained whether there are constants in the mentioned canons. And the results are the following: Homer and Hesiod referred to as the best poets,²⁴ tragedy and comedy²⁵ (as far as the latter is concerned Lucian seems to have had in mind that of Aristophanes), Plato and Socrates as the protagonist of his dialogues. Thus, Plato's name appears in a very indicative context, where a close relationship has been established between his work and that of the authors interested in the subject-matter of poetry or, in other words, *myth*. This can be explained by his apparent aspiration to visualize mythical patterns when his concept essentially determined by *logos* cannot be developed any further, and this very conceptualization

19. Cf. Lucian, *Charon or the Inspectors* (*Contemplantes*), 7 where Homer's poetic word is represented as being even capable of provoking storms on the peaceful waters of the river of the dead as soon as it is uttered by the author on the boat of Charon.

20. *Dance*, 60-61, where Homer and Hesiod along with the best poets, especially those characterized as tragic, are referred to as canonical. The lack of mention of Plato's name in Lucian's writing can be explained by the fact that it is essentially based on the doctrine of the parts of soul as expressed in the fourth book of the *Republic*, 439d-440e and explicitly mentioned by the author himself (70).

21. 22.

22. *Essays in Portraiture*, 6, 7, 8 and 17.

23. Unlike the mentioned exponents of the Second Sophistic who desperately tried to disguise key elements of their poetics, Lucian made them publicly known in the canons referred to above, which is why he was not even mentioned in Philostratus' register of the sophists. This explains in the best way possible why his writings are of inestimable value for our understanding of the new sophistic.

24. It is noteworthy to point out that, in contrast to the canons we encounter in the *Dance* and *Essays in Portraiture*, Homer and Hesiod were not explicitly mentioned as such in the one appearing in *Lexiphanes*.

25. It is worthy of note that there is no mention of comedy in the canon appearing in the *Dance*, which can be explained by the fact that what was termed *tragodia* included, implicitly, comedy, all the more so since the latter was Lucian's favourite genre, otherwise characterized as "attractive, lovely comedy" in his canon in *Lexiphanes*.

of the mythical imagery²⁶ helps us understand why Socrates, along with Homer and Hesiod, was represented as an exemplary painter in the canon of fine and plastic arts in *Imagines*,²⁷ and why so large a space in the text of the Greek novel was reserved for the descriptions of paintings and sculptures having, as will be seen later, a profound philosophical dimension.

A very close relationship has thus been established between mythical, or rather poetic image, and pictorial (sculptural) concept on one side and Platonic idea on the other, as testified by an illustrative example from Lucian's above-mentioned work, in which painting with words the portrait of Panthia—a woman of divine beauty and on top of that inspired by men's aristocratic ideal of καλοκἀγαθία (*kalokagathía*)—was deliberately chosen to visualize, as far as the needs of rhetorical instruction are concerned, the two basic principles of the new rhetoric given in bare outline in the *Phaedrus*,²⁸ such as the analytical partition of a phenomenon (διαίρεσις – *diaireseis*) and synoptic reduction of the partitioned to a single idea (συναγωγή – *synagogaí*), with both of them being slightly modified and disguised as παραδείγματα (*paradeigmata*) and ἄρχετυπα (*archétypa*) in his dialogue²⁹ closely associated with *Imagines*—something that points to the fact that the relationship between archetype, Platonic idea and poetic image has become ever more evident in the early period of the Second Sophistic.³⁰

This has brought us one big step closer to our goal of understanding the true nature of the Second Sophistic in so far as the description of painting the portrait of Panthia enabled us to see clearly what the use of the above-mentioned principles (*diáireseis* and *synagogaí*) in the schools of rhetoric looked like. What is referred to here is the method that could best be characterized as *assembling* or, in other words, *montage*, which makes it more difficult even for a scholar to understand the deeper and true meaning of things simply due to the fact that nowadays *montage* itself is largely identified with a wide range of purely technical and

26. It should be pointed out that giving Thucydides the status of canonical author in *Lexiphanes* (22) can be interpreted in the same way, since his conceptual elaboration of real, historical events may be regarded as a kind of complement to Plato's method applied to the polar opposite subject-matter, such as myth. We can rightly assume that, as far as literary canons are concerned, Lucian passed over in silence Herodotus' work which seemed to be of greater importance than that of Thucydides to the men of letters in their attempt to work out literary material, as can be inferred from his writings *Herodotus or Aëtion* and *On the Syrian Goddess (De Syria dea)*, the latter of which stands out from the former for a noble attempt at imitating the celebrated historian's style. Truth be told, there is yet another exception in so far as we encounter rhetoricians presented as canonical authors in *Lexiphanes* (22).

27. *Essays in Portraiture*, 17: "We shall require many models ... and one, like herself (sc. Panthia), Ionic, painted and wrought by Aeschines, the friend of Socrates, and by Socrates himself, of all craftsmen the truest copyists because they painted with love".

28. 266b.

29. *Essays in Portraiture Defended (Pro imaginibus)*, 10.

30. *Ibid.*, 15.

mechanical skills all too craftsmanslike in nature. The paradox, then, is that in Lucian's epoch, as opposed to now, the aforesaid method was under the influence of Plato's philosophy closely linked to achieving sublime, lofty objectives in the field of art and literature, as can be inferred from the fact that the author's painting with words, or rather *assembling* the portrait of Panthia was represented as if the greatest names of fine and plastic art shared the task of portraying with each other and consequently shaped that part of her figure in the elaboration of which they were thought to be peerless,³¹ as advocated by none other than Socrates in his conversations with both Parrhasius the painter³² and Cleito the sculptor³³ in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* which can rightly be regarded as the legend of Socrates launched almost immediately after his death with the aim of putting the key terms of his political testament in *Alcibiades*³⁴ into practice as far as the literary activity is concerned. It's a strange paradox that the products of this seemingly dead art sprung from *montage* are, far from being dead and lifeless, truly immortal, in so far as their life in eternity is guaranteed by nothing other than the method itself. In order to understand how it is possible that an eternal life pulsates at high pressure through something seemingly dead, light must previously be shed on the phenomenon of the old Socratic *plasma* and the symbolism closely connected with it, as reflected in both Lucian's and Philostratus' work.

31. Ibid, 6-7.

32. Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 3, 10, 1-5.

33. Ibid, 3, 10, 6-15.

34. 123d-e. What we are referring to here are *sophía* and *epiméleia* (*wisdom* and *industry*) as concepts initially having political dimension and being later on, under the influence of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, closely associated with the central principles of the new rhetoric in the *Phaedrus* (*diáiréseis*, *synagogai*, i.e. analytical partition of the phenomenon and the synoptic reduction of the partitioned to a single idea respectively)—something that, as will be seen later, gave occasion for promoting the *montage* as the most efficient method for increasing creativity in both literary writings and plastic arts. That the new rhetoric had carried off an overwhelming victory over the rhetoric of a scholastic, technical type in the period of the Second Sophistic can be inferred, among other things, from a particularly characteristic statement we come across in Eunapius's *Lives* (497) about Libanius' rival Acacius said to have decisively based his method on ancient models (*léxis metὰ krótou pros ton archaíon metéstrephe týpon*). On the basis of the similar formulation in Lucian [*To One Who Said You're a Prometheus in Words* (3): *archaióterón ti tou plásmatos*] we can rightly assume that what Lucian meant here was Socratic *plasma*—something that Rohde failed to notice, as will be seen later. The same is also true for his failure to observe that the *Phaedrus*, Socrates and Plato's oeuvre account for the better part of the citations and allusions in Philostratus and Eunapius' *Lives of the Sophists*, as can be concluded from the citation and allusion index such as the one provided by Wilmer Cave Wright in his study edition of the mentioned authors.

Lucian, Old Socratic *plasma* and the Principles of the New Rhetoric and New Art in *Phaedrus*

Lucian's description of painting the portrait of Panthia contains two key messages, with the first of them reading: the above-mentioned principles are by themselves capable of making a divinity of a mortal woman, as was actually the case with Panthia after being happily turned into an artist's model, and the second one being not so easy to decipher due to both the relatively unusual milieu it was transmitted from and something that appeared at first sight to be purely craftsmanslike in nature. This second message was for yet another reason hardly detectable, as evidenced by the fact that it has been conveyed implicitly to the readership exhorted by their author to raise the logical question as to how great potential the above-mentioned method must necessarily have for making a god of an artist, i.e., rhetorician, if what seemed to be an ordinary artist's model acquired, due to that, characteristics of immortality.³⁵

The answer to the question as to what has such a daemonic power could be found in the emblematic passage from the second part of the *Phaedrus*, Plato's programmatic dialogue, where we come across Socrates' open confession that he personally regards one capable of looking at the same time towards One (*synagogaî*) and many (*diairéseis*) as a god, which makes him walk after that person and enthusiastically follow in his footsteps.³⁶ This kind of "following in someone else's footsteps" will, as will be seen later, turn out to be the key when it comes to shedding light on the phenomenon of the Greek novel as well as the better part of post-classical Greek literature. Thus, the main message, conveyed through painting the portrait of Panthia, essentially characterized by *montage*, reads: the author makes known to his readership in a graphic and yet enigmatic way that he too, filled with a kind of religious fervour, continues to follow in Socrates' footsteps, looking on him as a divinity, as testified, among other things, by the fact that both the concepts and the scenic elements of his dialogues are reminiscent of their Platonic models.³⁷

35. That can explain the habit of the sophists to dress themselves in the finest clothes in their public appearances, a fact for which Rohde had only the ready-made qualifier *barbarian* simply due to his misunderstanding of the phenomenon.

36. *Phaedrus*, 266b-c with an allusion to Homer's *Odyssey* (5, 193): ἐάν τε τιν' ἄλλον ἡγήσωμαι δυνατὸν εἰς ἓν καὶ ἐπὶ πολλὰ πεφυκόθ' ὄραν, τοῦτον διώκω κατόπισθε μετ' ἔχνιον ὥστε θεοῖο καὶ μέντοι καὶ τοῦς δυναμένους αὐτὸ δρᾶν.

37. Cf. *The Dead Come to Life or the Fisherman (Piscator)*, 6 where the message of Lucian's devoutness to the ideals of Platonic, or rather Socratic philosophy is conveyed implicitly through the use of the plural (philosophers) instead of the singular (philosopher), as can be inferred from the emblematic concept of the poet or rhapsode as a bee flitting from flower to flower, borrowed by the author from the *Ion* (534a-b): "I have always consistently admired philosophy and extolled you (sc. all of you) and lived on intimate terms with the writings that you have left behind. These very phrases that I utter—

We can grasp the very essence of *montage* as a method closely connected with and inseparable from *following in someone else's footsteps* when contrasting it with its very opposite, such as *invention*—something that will shed light on and help us understand what seemed at first sight to be quite uncommon aesthetic and evaluation criteria applied in later times, such as those of the Second Sophistic, namely criteria which turned out unexpectedly to be essentially based on both the key premises of Platonic philosophy and its emblematic images. In Lucian's fairly brief writing *To One Who Said You're a Prometheus in Words* (*Prometheus es in verbis*), we come across such an emblematic image exuding Platonic influence and showing in a vivid, straightforward manner the core of the relationship between the two opposite methods referred to above, with the invention itself, explicitly characterized as *plasma*, being therein symbolized by Promethean figures made of clay and becoming living creatures as soon as Athena breathes into the mud and thus makes the clay models live, which is why the creation resulting from such a method assumed, as was to be expected, characteristics of a full-blown, truly living art.³⁸

On the other hand, the *assembling* itself, based in a decisive measure on the archetype, (ἀρχέτυπον – *archétypon*), was also denoted by the term *plasma* in Lucian's mentioned work and, moreover, additionally characterized by the attribute ἀρχαιότερον (*archaióteron*)³⁹ with the intent of giving honour to the method itself, as testified by the fact that he prides himself on his devoutness to the *montage* while disparaging the invention as καινότης (*kainótes*),⁴⁰ καινοποιεῖν (*kainopoieîn*)⁴¹ and καινουργόν (*kainourgón*)⁴² understood as *sheer novelty* and as such lasting only for a short period of time. For now at least, we have the sense that the seemingly dead art which originated in the process of *assembling* is of a higher order than that which springs from invention, and what we still need to be assured that our initial assumption was not off the mark, is yet another emblematic image now concerning the concept of assembling, i.e., *montage* itself.

As such an image could not be found in Lucian's work, we were forced to make a detour into the same spiritual milieu and one of its most representative works such as Philostratus' *Imagines*, where we encountered it. The finding itself

where else but from you did I get them? Culling them like a bee, I make my show with them before men, who applaud and recognize where and from whom and how I gathered each flower ...” The English version of the passage is borrowed from A. M. Harmon's study edition of Lucian (Loeb Classical Library), which is also true for all the other quotations from the mentioned author.

38. *To One Who Said You're a Prometheus in Words*, 3: ... συνειργάζετο δέ τι καὶ ἡ Ἀθηνᾶ ἐμπνέουσα τὸν πηλὸν καὶ ἔμψυχα ποιοῦσα εἶναι τὰ πλάσματα.

39. Ibid, 3: ἐμοὶ δὲ οὐ πᾶν ἱκανὸν, εἰ καινοποιεῖν δοκοῖν, μηδὲ ἔχει τις λέγειν ἀρχαιότερόν τι τοῦ πλάσματος, οὗ τοῦτο ἀπόγονόν ἐστιν.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

surpassed all expectations in so far as it subsequently turned out that Philostratus' description of a painting featuring Daedalus' workshop⁴³ together with Lucian's emblematic image of Prometheus' modelling human figures in clay makes up a form of methodological diptych, with its parts standing in sharp contrast to each other. That in Philostratus' description Daedalus is represented as Socrates and his workshop as that of Socrates can be inferred from the fact that he speaks Attic, being, moreover, barefooted and clothed in tribon as a characteristic Socratic overcoat. That this is an allusive and yet elegant technique can be deduced from the fact that before starting on modelling his figures Daedalus is represented as "looking intently at the intelligible reality exceeding by far the cognitive powers of human mind"⁴⁴—a fact which clearly points to the famous passage from the myth of the winged chariot in the *Phaedrus* dealing with ὑπερουράνιος (*hyperouránios*),⁴⁵ i.e., the top of the vault of heaven as a realm of perfect Forms, which could be regarded as yet another clear indication that Philostratus thereby wanted to lay particular stress on the fact that he remained faithful to the ideals of a new art essentially based on the key postulates of the new rhetoric as expressed in the *Phaedrus*.

What is going on in the mentioned workshop clearly suggests that life pulsates at high pressure through this seemingly dead art sprung from *montage*, with figures including that of a cow being present in it in all their developmental phases, i.e. from a rough draft and its somewhat elaborated version to the shapes already giving an inkling of motion and gradually coming out of the workshop, thus covering all the stages in their life progress, from, so to speak, a bud to a ripened fruit, so that it is hard to shake off the feeling that a specific sea of life overflows from the workshop of Daedalus, Socrates' legendary ancestor. There is no more doubt that Lucian's *old plasma* is nothing other than Socrates' plasma, with the quintessence of this "new" art, essentially determined by *montage*, lying, unlike that of Promethean plasma and its narrow, limited lifespan, just in *palingenesis*, i.e., in a never-ending process of rebirth of the same mythical and poetic concept in the form of *plasma* and its eternal life in metamorphose, as shown by the fact that the concept itself, although substantially the self-same, is increasingly assuming new forms with the result that a steady flow of diversity circulates through thematic uniformity and monotony, which is to be regarded as *atopon*, with one and the same poetic motif simultaneously being the same and different, as in the case of another painting in Philostratus,⁴⁶ representing Achilles as a child and his ethos. Thus, what has emerged is a sharp contrast between Promethean plasma and its limited lifespan on one side and the old Socratic

43. *Imagines*, 1, 16 (Pasiphae).

44. Ibid: αὐτὸς ὁ Δαίδαλος ἀττικίζει μὲν καὶ τὸ εἶδος ὑπέροφόν τι καὶ ἔννου βλέπων...

45. 247b-248a.

46. *Imagines*, 2, 2 (Education of Achilles).

plasma on the other, with the latter's daemonic power to provide an eternal life for its creations.

We can get the full picture of the art symbolized by Daedalus' workshop only after having hermeneutically read, along with Lucian and Philostratus' work, Plato's early dialogues, where we come across a whole series of artisan terms and expressions used in an attempt by the above-mentioned authors to graphically illustrate strenuous exertions in seeking to shed light on, elaborate and put finishing touches to a detail found in the archetype, such as *forging by the craftsman's hammer in the blacksmith's workshop* in Lucian,⁴⁷ *boring, polishing with the cutting edge and sawing* in Philostratus,⁴⁸ or again kindred expressions like *scraping, filing, whetting and cutting to small pieces* in Plato's *Hippias*,⁴⁹ which explains in the best way possible why such an art is so close to life, as evidenced by the fact that its creations cover a long distance from a bud to a ripened fruit or, to be more precise, from a rough draft to the final, polished version. The cited passage from Lucian's *Demosthenis encomium* graphically illustrates the essence of such an art, a passage that will bring us closer to both the ideal of life and aesthetics and evaluation criteria, otherwise closely associated with the phenomenon of Socrates' old *plasma*, without which it is not at all possible to understand either the poetics of the novel or the better part of the corpus of post-classical Greek literature.

The Song of the Sirens:

Old Socratic *plasma* at its Best and its Reflection in the Greek Novel

Despite what has been said about the main aesthetic and methodological principles, as expressed in Philostratus' and Lucian's emblematic images and the literary canons of the latter, we need yet another key detail which may additionally explain why the old Socratic *plasma* held a special attraction for the above-mentioned authors, as evidenced by the fact that they walked after Socrates with religious fervour and followed in his footsteps, inspired, so it seems, by the above mentioned celebrated message of the *Phaedrus*, which made them look on the legendary philosopher as a divinity—something that will provide an incentive for recreating ideals of both aesthetics and life, restored to all

47. *In Praise of Demosthenes (Demosthenis encomium)*, 14: ἔμψυχον καὶ σφυρήλατον ἐποίησεν τὸν λόγον.

48. *Imagines* 1, 16: ... τῶν Ἑρώτων καὶ οἱ τὸ τρύπανον ... στρέφοντες καὶ οἱ ... τῷ σκεπάρνῳ λεαίνοντες τὰ μήπω ἡκριβωμένα ... οἱ δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ πρίονος ἔννοιάν τε ὑπερβέβληκασιν πάσαν.

49. *Greater Hippias*, 304b: κνήσματά τοί ἐστὶν καὶ περιμήματα τῶν λόγων ... κατὰ βραχὺ διηρημένα.

their former glory in the later periods of the Second Sophistic, as will be seen shortly.

We can obtain an answer to the question concerning the magnetic attraction exerted on the men of letters by Socrates' plasma compared, among other things, to the songs of the Sirens in Alcibiades' speech in the *Symposium*,⁵⁰ only after having established a connection between the critical judgments of two authors, who, as far as ancient literary criticism is concerned, were the only style theorists that hit the mark and noticed an ironical, comical note in Socrates' or Plato's way of speaking and writing, as testified by Aristotle's statement⁵¹ that by using one and the same stylistic device in the *Phaedrus*, such as dithyrambic compounds, Plato managed to achieve a huge effect, resulting in the fusion of polar opposites, such as pathos and humour. What Aristotle seemed to hint at was most probably Socrates' second speech on love in the *Phaedrus* as well as its emblematic feature, the myth of the winged chariot. Aristotle's attitude becomes increasingly important if complemented by the one we encounter in Lucian's *Hall* about Socrates proclaiming lofty ideals, and at the same time imperceptibly poking fun at Phaedrus of Myrrhinus as if the latter were—to paraphrase the author's words—a small, snotty child.⁵²

Thus in keeping with Norden's favourite term, the myth of the winged chariot turned out to be a specific *Signatur* of Socrates' style, in so far as both flying up to ethereal heights, couched in lyric images, and a certain comicality reminiscent of childish naïve tales were mixed with and fused to each other in it in such a way, that the human eye—to use yet again Philostratus' celebrated analogy⁵³—might not be capable of discerning where the sublime ends and the comical begins and what is so funny about such absolutely lofty subject-matter.⁵⁴ This kind of unparalleled combination of polar opposites in Socrates' style was, due to its daemonic power, regarded as something beyond imitation, just the way any attempt to remain indifferent to this type of creation reminiscent of a specific song of the Sirens was deemed next to impossible. What can also be adduced to explain the reason why this feature of Socrates' style remained peerless is Lucian's oeuvre itself in which the method of interweaving polar opposites such

50. 216a.

51. *Art of Rhetoric*, 3, 7 (1408b).

52. *Hall*, 4: καίτοι Σωκράτει μὲν ἀπέχρησε πλάτανος εὐφυῆς ... καὶ πηγὴ διαυγῆς μικρὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰλισσοῦ, κἀνταῦθα καθεζόμενος Φαίδρου τε τοῦ Μυρρινουσίου κατειρωνεύετο καὶ τὸν Λυσίου τοῦ Κεφάλου λόγον διήλεγχε καὶ τὰς Μούσας ἐκάλει, καὶ ἐπίστευεν ἥξειν αὐτὰς ἐπὶ τὴν ἐρημίαν.

53. Philostratus, *Imagines*, 2, 2.

54. On the mixture of the serious and the laughable as a widespread ideal of life and aesthetics in late antiquity and the Middle Ages see Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1961), 419-434. It is worth mentioning that Platonic origin of the mixture is not even touched upon in his summary presentation of the phenomenon.

as the serious and the laughable was characterized by perfect harmony and symmetry,⁵⁵ yet despite all this, the above-mentioned parts of a whole might be separated from each other if an operation were to be carried out on the text with the precision of a surgeon, so that an attentive reader, in keeping with Philostratus' analogy, could almost without effort discern where the serious ends and the laughable begins.

Thus, as regards the aforesaid main characteristic of Socrates' style, men of letters had to content themselves with a substitute for it, such as imitating the remaining features of his art of speaking, with those allusive and symbolic standing out distinctly from the rest, as testified by a particularly characteristic passage from Plato's early dialogue *Laches*⁵⁶ where we come across an explicit statement saying that as a rule Socrates' speech on children passes imperceptibly into one about men—a fact which recommended him as a teacher of children and adults alike and, by the same token, of the entire Greek world, which would find its clear reflection in both the novel and the works of the major exponents of the Second Sophistic, as will be seen shortly. Another characteristic of Socrates' style, as expressed in dithyrambic compounds, poetic images and analogies, seemed convenient to be set as a model for imitation, all the more as it was, along with the aforementioned ones, used in his speeches in both the *Phaedrus* and the *Phaedo* in such a way that the entire phenomenon might rightly be regarded as a philosophical poetry.⁵⁷

Finally, a combination of the mentioned features of Socrates' style immediately sprang to mind as an ideal solution, in so far as this kind of philosophical poetry seemed to be closely linked to the symbol and thus to leave ample room for men of letters to exalt the glory of Socrates' or Plato's philosophy with the noble aim to make it, in keeping with the key message of Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades*,⁵⁸ continuously resound like a specific song of the Sirens for centuries to come—something that, as far as the mentioned litterateurs are concerned, could have been achieved by playing a specific game of hide-and-seek with the analogies, namely a play essentially based on recycling one and the same archetypal idea

55. *To One Who Said You're a Prometheus in Words*, 5.

56. 188b.

57. Cf. Giovanni Reale, *Platone, Simposio: introduzione, traduzione, note e apparati* (Milano: Bompiani, 2000), 41: "... Platone vuole indicare in modo emblematico (sc. by means of Socrates' successful attempt to drive Agathon and Aristophanes to the admission that the same man could have the knowledge required for writing comedy and tragedy and that the fully skilled tragedian could be a comedian as well) la sua convinzione di essere proprio lui *tale poeta*. La sua opera, nella dimensione del vero guadagnato mediante la filosofia, e quindi come poesia filosofica, inverte e supera la tragedia e la commedia."

58. 123d, where the stress is laid on the two crucial forces, such as 'wisdom' and 'industry', or rather σοφία (*sophía*) and ἐπιμέλεια (*epiméleia*) which were later to be given the role of a specific bulwark in defending the Greek living space from foreign influences as well as a guarantor of victory in any future clashes with the barbarian element.

and resulting in an entire sea of concepts. That the above-mentioned testament might have played an important role in the process of conceiving the poetics of both the Greek novel and the literary products of the Second Sophistic can be deduced from the fact that for men of letters Platonic philosophy, Socratic style and its marvelous *plasma* were, no matter how paradoxical it may sound, more important than their own writings, as can be inferred from Lucian's explicit statement,⁵⁹ which could have served as a guideline for how we should read their own oeuvre including that of the authors of the Greek novel.

Byzantine Novel: Barbarism or Symbolism?

It is through the use of symbols that the two exponents of the genre in the age of Komnenoi, Makrembolites' and Prodromos' novel, bring us closer to understanding the higher-order goals with which both the origins and poetics of the genre are closely associated. Unravelling enigmas posed by hardly visible symbols was only possible by applying the method of comparative analysis requiring a lot of repeated reading of the same text. There is, however, an additional problem resulting from the fact that the aforesaid symbols are fully disguised by what seemed at first sight to be rambling details making no sense—something that Rohde couldn't help but label "barbarian,"⁶⁰ given his misunderstanding of the phenomenon. Ironically enough, what appears at first sight to be a formulation bereft of logic and sense ended up having not only its logical place in the composition of a whole but also the capacity to make that whole assume, in keeping with the key principles of Lucian's poetics, characteristics of harmony and symmetry. As far as the composition itself is concerned, key passages from Makrembolites' novel, i.e., those opening, central and final, fully characterized by the emblematic images of Plato's philosophy, point more than anything else to just that kind of conclusion, which might not be drawn if the compositional aspect was overlooked, with the above-mentioned images being, as a result of this kind of failure, inevitably reduced to nothing other than a platitude and inflatedness.

59. *The Dead Come to Life or the Fisherman*, 6: " ... and although ostensibly it is I whom they (sc. men) admire for the bouquet, as a matter of fact it is you (sc. philosophers, first of all Socrates and Plato) and your garden, because you have put forth such blossom, so gay and varied in their hues—if one but knows how to select and interweave and combine them so that they will not be out of harmony with one another."

60. *Der griechische Roman*, 561: " ... und das Ergebnis ist doch nur ein, selbst den Achilles überbietendes Wortgekräusel und peinliches Difteln in armselig anspruchsvollen Phrasen (sc. in Makrembolites' novel), denen die ganz korrupte ... Redeweise ... noch einen besonders barbarischen Zusatz gibt."

Already in the opening passages from Makrembolites' novel we come across the scene wherein the novel's protagonist compares himself to both divinity⁶¹ and Socrates.⁶² The names of Socrates' legendary ancestors, Daedalus⁶³ and Hephaestus,⁶⁴ are also mentioned in the same context and, moreover, associated with the making of bird figures adorning the garden well in Aulikomis, namely a well whose motionless water surface is said—due to the wonderful effect produced by white island marble laid in its bottom and artfully marked with dark dappling—to create the impression of running like a stream, with stormy sea waves⁶⁵ at times seemingly swelling upon it, which seems to contain a veiled allusion to both the emblematic feature of Socrates' speeches, equated in the *Hippias* with muddying the discussion,⁶⁶ and the daemonic power of his word reminiscent of truly poetic, i.e., Homeric, utterances capable of provoking storms even on the river of the dead in the underworld, as can be inferred from a passage from Lucian's oeuvre.⁶⁷ There is in the same context yet another emblematic image, this time borrowed from the *Ion*, in which poet or, to be more precise, rhapsode is represented as an ordinary channel having no higher purpose than to let the daemonic force of poetry, streaming from the divine, celestial heights, pass through him⁶⁸ and thereby create the possibility for that force to both reveal itself to the world and people and make them dance to the beat of its lovely rhythms capable of galvanizing anyone. In a specific game of hide-and-seek the archetype in the *Ion* was subjected to a strange kind of metamorphosis in Makrembolites' novel, as a result of which it turned out to be almost unrecognizable, as evidenced by the fact that the men appearing in the archetypal concept were substituted in the latter with the trees, said to be broadening their branches and embracing

61. *Hysmine and Hysminias*, 1, 3, 1: ἤκω κήρυξ καὶ δέχομαι παρ' αὐτῆς οὐχ ὡς κήρυξ ἀλλ' ὡς θεός.

62. *Ibid*, 1, 3, 2: ἐμὲ δὲ περιστᾶσι, καὶ λαμπρόν τινα χορὸν τοῦτον ἐλίσσουσιν, οἶον καὶ Σωκράτην οἱ ζηλωταὶ περιειστήκεισαν.

63. *Ibid*, 1, 5, 6: ἃ πάνθ' (sc. figuras avium) ... Δαιδάλου χεὶρ ἐτεχνούρησεν ...

64. *Ibid*, 1, 5, 6: ἃ πάνθ' (sc. figuras avium) Ἥφαιστος ἐχαλκούργησε.

65. *Ibid*, 1, 5, 7: τὸν τοῦ φρέατος πυθμένα νησιώτης ἐκόσμιε λίθος λευκὸς μὲν, ἀλλ' ὑπεμελαίνετο κατὰ μέρη ... ὡς ἐντεῦθεν δοκεῖν τὸ ὕδωρ κινεῖσθαι διηλεκῶς καὶ κατακυματοῦσθαι καὶ οἶον ἀνακυρτοῦσθαι.

66. *Lesser Hippias*, 373a: ἀλλὰ Σωκράτης ... ἀεὶ ταραττει ἐν τοῖς λόγοις καὶ εἰκεν ὥσπερ κακουργοῦντι.

67. See n. 19. What we read in Dio Chrysostom's fairly brief discourse (55, 9), or rather "essay" speaks volumes about striking similarities between Homer and Socrates, as evidenced 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 and were furthermore most "effective at making similes, comparisons and analogies." It has turned out that what applies to Homer's word does also to that of Socrates.

68. *Ion*, 533d-534b: ἔστι γὰρ τοῦτο τέχνη μὲν οὐκ ὄν παρὰ σοὶ περὶ Ὀμήρου εἰδὲ λέγειν, ὃ νῦν δὴ ἔλεγον, θεία δὲ δύναμις ἣ σε κινεῖ.

themselves in the rhythms of a choral song⁶⁹ in order to form a vault of crowns impenetrable to sun-beams otherwise reaching to the ground only when Zephyrus creates some kind of a channel on the top of crowns by shifting their leaves with his whiff—something that in an allusion to the celebrated *Iliad* verse⁷⁰ was characterized by the novel's protagonist as *chryséa seirá* ("a chain of gold")⁷¹ symbolizing heavenly love⁷² in Lucian and, by the same token, enthusiasm and mania-related origins of both poetry and rhetoric⁷³ streaming from the realm beyond heaven, as depicted in the myth of the winged chariot.

We also come across reflections which the two emblematic metaphors appearing in the second part of the *Phaedrus*, such as *writing in the black water*⁷⁴ and *planting the garden of letters*⁷⁵ found in the final passages from Makrembolites' novel, where the author gives vent to his own and his dearest's desire for their love adventures to be written in a kind of indelible script so as to be eternized, and for better understanding of what follows it is also worth noting that the mentioned metaphors were used by Socrates for the purpose of demonstrating all the impotence of the script when contrasted with the living and breathing word and its daemonic power to imprint itself on the soul of the listeners. It was, however, not that difficult to notice the reflection of the aforesaid metaphors in Makrembolites' novel, given that we find them therein slightly modified and changed into metaphors of both *painting on water*⁷⁶ and *painting by means of plants*

69. *Hysmine and Hysminias*, 1, 4: δάφνη γὰρ καὶ μυρρίνη καὶ κύπαριττος καὶ ἄμπελοι ... ἐφαπλοῦσι τοὺς κλάδους ὡς χεῖρας καὶ ὥσπερ χορὸν συστησάμενα κατοροφοῦσι τὸν κῆπον.

70. 8, 19: σειρὴν χρυσεῖην ἐξ οὐρανόθεν κρεμάσαντες.

71. *Hysmine and Hysminias*, 1, 4: ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπον ἰδὼν· χρυσεῖαν ἐπλέξω μοι τὴν σειράν, Σώσθηνες. On the popularity of the Homeric image closely associated with the myth of the winged chariot in the period of the Second Sophistic cf. Lucian, *Hermotimus or Concerning the Sects*, 3: ὁ τοῦ Ὀμήρου Ζεὺς χρυσὴν τινα σειράν καθιεῖς τοὺς αὐτοῦ λόγους, ὅφ' ὦν σε ἀνασπᾷ δηλαδὴ καὶ ἀνακουφίζει πρὸς αὐτόν.

72. Lucian, *In Praise of Demosthenes*, 13: τὴν δ' οὐρανοῦ χρυσεῖς τινας σειρὰς ἔλξιν (sc. κἀνταυθ' ἂν φιλοσοφοῖς τῷ λόγῳ) οὐ πυρὶ καὶ τόξοις ἐντιθεῖσαν δυσάλθεῖς νόσους τραυμάτων.

73. *In Praise of Demosthenes*, 13 where Demosthenes' oratory is essentially characterized by *sóphron manía*: ... ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κάλλους ἄχραντόν τε καὶ καθαρὰν ἰδέαν ἐξορμῶσαν (sc. τὴν δ' οὐρανοῦ χρυσεῖς τινας σειρὰς ἔλξιν) μανίᾳ σάφρονι τῶν ψυχῶν ...

74. 276c: οὐκ ἄρα σπουδῇ αὐτὰ ἐν ὕδατι γράψει μέλανι σπείρων διὰ καλάμου μετὰ λόγων ἀδυνάτων μὲν αὐτοῖς λόγῳ βοηθεῖν, ἀδυνάτων δὲ ἱκανῶς τάληθῇ διδάξαι.

75. 276d: ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὲν ἐν γράμμασι κήπους ... παιδιᾷς χάριν σπερεῖ τε καὶ γράψει, ὅταν δὲ γράφῃ, ἐαυτῷ τε ὑπομνήματα θησαυριζόμενος ...

76. *Hysmine and Hysminias*, 11, 21: σὺ δ' ἄλλ', ὦ Πόσειδον ... ἡμῖν οὐ περισώσεις τὴν μνήμην (ἀθάνατον) ... τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐν ὕδατι καταζωγραφῶν καὶ μέχρις ἐσχάτων τηρῶν ἀναπόνητα.

and their floral adornment.⁷⁷ It was, however, much harder to fathom out their meaning, simply due to the fact that it was, first of all, necessary to establish a logical relationship between the keywords appearing in the same context, such as the names of the mythical personalities Icarus, Daphne and Hyacinth, including the emblematic metaphor of living speech as a sculpture in Plato's *Republic*,⁷⁸ slightly altered by the addition of the adjective κατάχρυσον (*katáchryson*) in Makrembolites.⁷⁹ Only thus was it possible to draw the conclusion that the author by using the above-mentioned keywords makes it known to his readership in a more implicit manner that his own story might also be eternized only if it assumes, like Socrates' life and words, characteristics of myth and legend—something that can only be achieved by applying the frequently mentioned principles of the new rhetoric, *diatareseis* and *synagogai*, to his own written compositions as well as by modelling his own and his protagonists' course of action down to the last detail upon Socrates' life, which found its reflection in the way of living enjoying widespread popularity in the later periods of the Second Sophistic covered by Eunapius' *Lives*, as will be seen shortly.

That it is all about the Socratic model is further corroborated by the final message we encounter at the very end of the novel, with the genre's term *drama*⁸⁰ not appearing therein, as it might seem at first sight, by sheer chance, a term with the help of which an essential relationship might, contrary to all expectations, be established between the allusiveness of Socrates' word, symbolism and the novel as a genre. And the message itself is hidden, as evidenced by the fact that the author recommends his own and his darling's adventures simultaneously to the opposed groups within the reading audience,⁸¹ as represented by those already seized by erotic mania as well as those whose attitude to love is marked by continence, i.e., "sophrosýne," while, regarding the full context essentially characterized by the emblematic images and metaphors of Platonic philosophy, it is pretty much clear that the message itself was conveyed in an enigmatic way to the entire readership, just because in the adventures referred to above both "manía" and "sophrosýne" were—in keeping with the final message of the myth of the winged chariot—interwoven with and fused to each other in perfect unity and proportion, considered to be a guarantee of a blissful life in this world.

77. Ibid, 11, 22: σὺ δ', ὦ Γῆ μήτερ ... φυτὰ δ' οὐκ ἀναδώσεις ὁμώνυμα ... ὅλον δρᾶμα τὸ καθ' ἡμᾶς τοῖς φυτοῖς καταζωγραφοῦσα.

78. 540c: παγκάλους, ἔφη, τοὺς ἄρχοντας, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὥσπερ ἀνδριαντοποιὸς ἀπείργασαι.

79. *Hysmine and Hysminias*, 1, 4: καὶ τις τῶν ὀψιγόνων καταρρητορεύσει ταῦτα καὶ ὡς ἀθάνατω στήλῃ τοῖς λόγοις ἀνδριάντα χακλουργήσει κατάχρυσον.

80. Ibid, 11, 24: κλήσις ἔστω τῇ βίβλῳ τὸ καθ' Ὑσμίνην δρᾶμα καὶ τὸν Ὑσμινίαν ἐμέ.

81. Ibid, 11, 23: ὅσον μὲν οὖν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐρωτικώτερον, τῶν πολλῶν ἐρωτικῶν χαριτων ἡμᾶς ἀποδέξεται καὶ ὅσον παρθενικὸν καὶ σεμνότερον, τῆς σωφροσύνης πάλιν ἀγάσεται· καὶ οὕτως ἡμῖν ἔσται τὰ τῆς μνήμης ἀθάνατα.

That the final message, conveyed by the author at the very end of his work, should be interpreted in a symbolic way is further corroborated by yet another scene we come across almost at the very end of Prodromos' novel, with the key principles of old Socratic plasma, or rather new rhetoric, *diairéseis* and *synagogai* (i.e. analytical partition of the phenomenon and synoptical reduction of the partitioned to a single idea), being visualized in it, as was otherwise the case with Lucian's *Essays in Portraiture (Imagines)*. What is depicted in the mentioned scene are the embraced figures of the protagonists and their fathers at the moment of the highest possible delight such as their reunification in the garden of Kratandros' house in Cyprus after so long a period of time marked by endless wandering and suffering. The form of the embraced figures intertwined with each other and characterized as *πλάσις* (*plásis*), gives the impression that four bodies either coalesced into one head or one head ramified into four bodies,⁸² with Socratic plasma's key principles, unrecognizably modified into *διαιρέω* (*diairéo*) and *συνιζάνω* (*synizáno*), thus being with almost religious fervour represented and eternized as a sculpture and, moreover, in the key passage such as the final one. We were, it seems, quite justified in speaking of religious fervour, simply due to the fact that one of the key terms, which is used to denote perfect number⁸³ in the philosophy of Pythagoras, appears in the above-mentioned passage from Prodromos' novel—something that could be explained by the author's noble aim of achieving perfection in a symbol-based elaboration of detail.

The central part of Makrembolites' novel or, to be more precise, its fourth book,⁸⁴ which is largely made up of the description of the ensemble of three large scale paintings depicted on the garden wall in Aulikomis, speaks volumes about the author's aspiration to achieve perfection in terms of composition. What we are referring to here is a series of wall paintings with Eros' boyish figure represented as naked and disproportionately large and, moreover, placed right in the middle of the cycle so as to be framed on one side by allegorical representations of the Virtues and on the other by those of months, symbolized by human figures denoting time and season-limited occupations, such as those of soldier, gardener, ploughman, shepherd and hunter, to mention just a few. We shall decipher the hidden meaning of the ensemble of paintings only when equating the allegorical figures of the Virtues and those of the months with the world of gods and the world of men respectively, which gives occasion for interpreting Eros' central position in the mentioned ensemble in accordance with the key message of Socrates' discourse in Plato's *Symposium*, with Eros himself being identified

82. Teodoro Prodro, *Rodante e Dosicle*, 9, 317-330: καὶ σχηματισμὸν καινὸν ἐξεζωγράφουν· / ὠρῶντο γὰρ τέτταρες ἄνθρωποι κάτω / ὡς εἰς κεφαλὴν προσπεφυκότες μίαν / ... / μίαν κεφαλὴν εἰς τετρακτὸν σωμάτων / διαιρεθεῖσαν, ἢ τετρακτὸν σωμάτων / οἷον συνιζηκυῖαν εἰς κάραν μίαν· / ζῶν τι τετράσωμον, ἢ τοῦναντίον / μονοπρόσωπον τεττάρων ζώων πλάσιν.

83. *Tetraktys* (9, 326, 327).

84. *Hysmine and Hysminias*, 4, 3-20.

therein with the daemon filling the void between these worlds by both transmitting and interpreting messages coming from the world of gods to that of men, and conversely.⁸⁵ Thus, the cycle of paintings with the key thesis of Socrates' speech in the *Symposium* depicted in it turned out to be nothing other than a symbol of the daemonic power of the old Socratic plasma, which, like Eros himself, transmits messages from one world to another.

On the basis of evidence obtained by unravelling the symbols, we are in a position to conclude that the old Socratic plasma was identified with the song of the Sirens even in an epoch as late as that of the Komnenoi. This tendency cannot be fully understood without evidence provided by Eunapius for the leading exponents of the Second Sophistic in its later, second phase such as, to name just a few, Chrysanthius, Aedesius and Prohaeresius who made great efforts to imitate Socrates' life down to the last detail, with this excessive zeal going in Prohaeresius' case so far as to induce him to spend cold winters in Gaul barefooted⁸⁶ and clad in a tiny threadbare cloak as well as to drink nearly freezing water of the Rhine regarded by him as the height of luxury,⁸⁷ and all of it, as it seems, with the aim of surpassing his master's legendary achievement during his military episode in ice-cold Potideia.⁸⁸ The Second Sophistic in a later phase covered by Eunapius' *Lives* is of paramount importance for understanding the phenomenon of the Greek novel due to, among other things, the fact that even the female exponents of this intellectual current, such as Sosipatra, follow, full of enthusiasm, in Socrates' footsteps,⁸⁹ which can explain in the best way possible the important role played by women in the plot of the Greek novel—something for which Rohde was unable to find an explanation,⁹⁰ despite the fact that it was within his reach.

85. 202e.

86. Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 492.

87. Ibid.

88. Plato, *Symposium*, 220b.

89. See Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 470 where the most sublime aspect of Platonic philosophy, such as both the translation of ideas and forms from the place beyond heaven to the earthly plane and the divination closely associated with it, as depicted in the myth of the winged chariot in the *Phaedrus*, is personified by a woman, none other than Sosipatra, who is, in no way by mere chance, presented as falling to both prophetic ecstasy and divinatory mania at the very moment she was discoursing on the central theme dealt with in Plato's mentioned work, such as the constituent parts of the soul and its descent into earth. The very fact that Sosipatra's character is modelled on the famous passage from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (1, 4), where Socrates lays stress on the importance of divination for every well-ordered society, clearly speaks of Xenophon's influence on Eunapius' writing.

90. *Der griechische Roman*, 71: "Im wirklichen Leben entwickelte sich höchstens den Heteren gegenüber eine gewisse Ritterlichkeit, die nun freilich mit einem sehr unangenehmen Zusatz frivoler Sentimentalität versetzt war ... Von einer wesentlich veränderten Stellung ehrbarer Mädchen und Frauen erfahren wir nichts."

The life of Libanius, as depicted in Eunapius' *Lives*,⁹¹ shows the extent to which the sophists of the period were driven by a passionate desire to live up to their billing as Socrates' followers. What is referred to here is the noble effort made by Libanius or, to be more precise, his "mission impossible" undertaken with the aim of transferring the mentioned daemonic features of Socrates' style to his way of living and his course of action. As it was very hard, as far as Socrates' style is concerned, to discern where the serious ends and the laughable begins and what is so funny about it, considering the lofty nature of the subject-matter, so Libanius himself was in a similar way regarded as a second self by all those admitted to his teaching despite the fact that they were pursuing modes of life opposed to one another, with the consequence that everyone applauded in him qualities that were opposite. This can be explained by the fact that all possible temperaments were constantly alternating and complementing each other in Libanius' personality, including those contrasting with each other and mutually exclusive—in full accordance, one may say, with Socrates' ideal of classifying speeches and souls with the aim of adapting the former to the most diverse temperaments of the audience, as advocated for in the *Phaedrus* (271d-e).

A Short Synopsis of Rohde's Theses as Presented in the Mentioned Chapter and Seen through the Prism of the Newly Gained Results

Due to the limited space, we focus our attention only on some of Rohde's particularly characteristic theses, as presented in the mentioned famous chapter, so as to highlight the deficiencies in their elaboration, and, by the same token, to point to the need for re-evaluating the entire corpus of post-classical Greek literature, all the more so, since the mentioned theses have done, as already seen, a great injustice to the Greek novel to degrade it to the level of barbarism, caricature⁹² and, moreover, children's naïve fairy tales.

That something was wrong, as already implied above, with Rohde's theses is also shown by the fact that the Greek novel, contrary to what was thought, turned out to be a specific hymn to both Platonic philosophy and the legendary Socratic plasma—a fact which may urge the need to revise some of his famous theses, all the more so since they, erroneously considered undisputed, found their reflection in large-scale works on literary history, rhetorical prose and the novel as a genre, such as those of Albin Lesky,⁹³ Eduard Norden⁹⁴ and Michail Bachtin⁹⁵ respectively.

91. 495-496.

92. *Der griechische Roman*, 559: "Der ganze Roman (sc. that of Makrembolites) ist nichts als eine Karrikatur der Erzählung des Achilles Tatius."

93. *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (Bern und München: Francke Verlag, 19713).

94. See n. 3.

95. Michail Bachtin, "Epos e romanzo," in *Problemi di teoria del romanzo: metodologia letteraria e dialettica storica* (Torino: Einaudi, 1976).

Taking a retrospective look at Rohde's theses seems to be important for yet another reason, since by doing so a key principle of great relevance to modern-day literary studies will be brought to light, along with a methodological imperative of great significance for future research on both the novel and the entire corpus of post-classical Greek literature. All the shortcomings of Rohde's theses were evident from the fact that he identified the new with the old sophistic, as a result of which low and selfish motives such as glory, splendid outward appearance and riches were regarded by him as the three mighty Sirens⁹⁶ exercising a decisive influence over both the world view and the literary activity of the leading exponents of the Second Sophistic, while, on the contrary, they were inspired by the lofty ideal of following in Socrates' footsteps and made great efforts to dance to the rhythms of corybantic élan⁹⁷ setting in motion his speeches in the *Phaedrus* so as to be able to revive in the best way possible his old plasma which they, following the example of Alcibiades in Plato's homonymous dialogue, regarded as a rapturous song of the Sirens. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that he characterized the rhetoric of the period as nothing other than "the Asiatic oratory known for its evil nature,"⁹⁸ with just the qualifier "Asiatic" being indicative of his disparaging attitude towards both the novel and the new rhetoric, in so far as it, instead of a geographic term, became an evaluation criterion now standing for literary creation of the worst possible kind, equated with the greatest possible evil and in other passages from his monograph characterized as "an eloquence bereft

96. *Der griechische Roman*, 316: "Kam nun zu der Gunst der Großen und der Bewunderung des Volkes noch die Lockung äußerer Vorteile, welche dem berühmten Redner und Redelehrer auf das reichste zuströmten, so könnte man in dieser dreifachen Macht des Ruhmes, des äußeren Glanzes und des Reichtums in der Tat die drei Sirenen erkennen wollen, welche so viele Bewerber schmeichlerisch an sich zogen."

97. See Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 501-502 where we come across a very revealing metaphor of reasoning, or rather elaborating the concepts and arguments as a "dance unfolding in the soul," namely a metaphor used by the author to graphically illustrate the effects of Chrysanthius' speech which like the sweetest song insinuates itself into all men's ears so as to both find its echo in the souls of the entire audience and—in keeping with the ideal of the new rhetoric as advocated by Socrates in the *Phaedrus*—adapt to the most diverse temperaments. The whole passage can also be regarded as an echo of Plato's concept of the theater of the world as reflected in the *Laws*, where the very processions, sacrifices, songs and dances were pointed out as the most advisable way of acting for man, regarded as an ordinary marionette of a deity, to spend his life in peacetime as best as possible by playing at the noblest of pastimes, in the *Philebus* (50b) succinctly characterized as the tragedy and comedy of life. See also n. 34.

98. *Der griechische Roman*, 311: "Außer einer strengeren und nüchterneren Übung der Kunst ... gab es eine üppigere Weise, welche im Glanze eines barock überladenen und grellen Schmuckes der Rede sich gefiel, die unter dem Namen der asianischen übel bekannte Beredsamkeit."

of emotions,"⁹⁹ "rhetorical emptiness"¹⁰⁰ as well as "immense vanity."¹⁰¹ Rohde was, unfortunately, unaware of the far-reaching consequences of a negative kind that this thesis of his would necessarily have had if the question arose as to how it was at all possible for such evil to continue to exist for an entire millennium and yet experience a resplendent renaissance in an epoch as late as that of the Komnenoi.

Conclusion: The Forthcoming Battle for Symbols

Finally, it turned out that all the deficiencies in Rohde's attitudes towards the Greek novel resulted from the fact that his research on the theory of narrative, quite rightly deemed a strong starting point, was not brought to an end in so far as it was not extended to the Byzantine period, more precisely to both 11th century rhetoric and the work of one of its most prominent exponents, with the *subject-matter of poetry* appearing all of a sudden in his definition of the third type of narration, which, from a purely formal point of view, could explain why stylistic elements of poetry have been widely applied in the Greek novel's prose narrative. As a result, Rohde had no other choice but to postulate the omnipotence of rhetoric as expressed in its centripetal force strong enough, in his view, to "suck in" all other genres, including both poetry and philosophy itself, due to which he succumbed to the temptation of comparing the Greek novel to its 19th century counterpart with which it has little in common.

A satisfactory explanation regarding the nature of rhetoric erroneously thought to be barbarian in the period of the Second Sophistic could be found in Eunapius' *Lives* which Rohde, for the reason stated above, did not dare to take into account, which ultimately proved to be an utter failure. Only on the basis of evidence provided by Eunapius, the far-reaching conclusion of paramount importance for the poetics of the Greek novel could be drawn, pointing to the *Phaedrus* and Socrates' speeches in it with their astonishing *plasma* as a prime mover behind all the ideals from which the late Greek renaissance drew its inspiration, a *plasma* that could in the best way possible explain the process of blending and fusing together poetry, philosophy and rhetoric with the purpose of creating a unified, organic whole. As an additional remark, it should be noted

99. Ibid, 348: "Freilich war diese Art empfindungsloser Schönrednerei die notwendige Frucht einer bis zur höchsten Stufe der technischen Entwicklung getriebenen Redekunst ..."

100. Ibid, 380: "Wir haben diese rhetorische Leere, der jeder Gegenstand lediglich zum Vorwand und Anlaß über rein formalen Kunstübung dienen muß, aus dem ganzen Wesen der Sophistik zu begreifen versucht; wir werden nicht erwarten, daß aus den erotischen Exerzitien dieser Wortkünstler eine tiefere Seelenerfahrung zu uns spreche."

101. Ibid, 341: "Vorán steht eine, zuweilen ganz maßlose Eitelkeit. Diese war freilich ein natürlicher Ergebnis ihres, ganz auf die persönliche Virtuosität gestellten Berufes."

that in Dio Chrysostom's short "essay" (or. 55) on Homer and Socrates the fusing of myth, history and fable was pointed out as an essential conceptual and stylistic feature of the mentioned authors—a fact which, apparently, speaks volumes about the true nature of both the Second Sophistic and the novel as a genre, with the fictional or rather realistic narrative in the latter thus ending up being nothing other than montage, as advocated for by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.

Thus, Rohde's controversial theses enabled us to draw three far-reaching conclusions on both the Greek novel and the entire corpus of post-classical Greek literature. First, we can rightly assume that the Greek novel still remains largely unread, and this is also true for the better part of post-classical Greek literature when it comes to an in-depth analysis of the texts. Second, the importance and relevance of the Greek novel to both the contemporary reading audience and the studies of modern literature is demonstrated by the fact that both the genre's plot and metaphors are laden with symbolism, as shown by particularly characteristic passages from the Byzantine novel, which gives rise to the assumption that a literary work bereft of a profound philosophical poetics is not worth much. Third, a major breakthrough in understanding the poetics of the Greek novel can only be achieved through an unrelenting battle for symbols.

Despite all that has been said about Rohde's theses, it would be wrong to conclude that his classical work is of little worth when it comes to inspiring further research efforts. As in the case of every major monograph, much of the book's significance lies in the fact that it raised the questions, such as those concerning the nature of the so-called erotic narrative (*erotische Erzählung*), the nature of sophisticated rhetoric and the role played in the Greek novel by both Tyche and women, none of which was fully answered to this very day. It can therefore be argued that what Hans-Georg Beck said about Krumbacher's classical work has to be true for Rohde's celebrated monograph as well:

"Was immer methodisch und sachlich an diesem Buch veraltet sein mag, ohne es ein paarmal durchgelesen zu haben, sollte man bei byzantinischer Literatur nicht mitsprechen!¹⁰²"

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102. Hans-Georg Beck, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend* (München: Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 19942), 350.

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