

**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 Kozic\*

*On the basis of evidence obtained by unraveling 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.*

### 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*,<sup>1</sup> 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 sophisteûsai*,<sup>2</sup> that reminds us of the aforesaid hybrid form, a formulation that assumed characteristics

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\*Professor, Department of Italian Studies, University of Belgrade, Serbia.

1. 2, 2 (Education of Achilles).

2. Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1921), 479: τὸς φιλοσοφῆσαντας ἐν δόξει τοῦ σοφιστεῦσαι καὶ τὸς οὕτω κυρίως προσηθέντας 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."

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 that he applies the name σοφιστής (*sophistés*) not only to orators whose surpassing eloquence won them a brilliant reputation, but also to philosophers who expounded their theories with ease and fluency,<sup>3</sup> 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 BC.<sup>4</sup> The fact that the above-mentioned characterization is the least difficult of all the others we encounter in the introductory 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 unraveling 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 post-classical Greek literature in its entirety.

In the introductory 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

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3. 484.

4. 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 (*Das Leben und Werke des Dio von Prusa*, 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.

that they play a game of hide-and-seek with the researcher – something that gains in importance all the more so as 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, 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*<sup>5</sup> Philostratus holds the view that the sophistic of his own time must not be called "new", but rather "second,"<sup>6</sup> because it is old, just due to the fact that it represents the same phenomenon as the ancient one.<sup>7</sup> Contrary to all expectation, Philostratus will outdo himself in clarifying this paradoxical attitude of his and saying that the new sophistic, unlike the ancient one 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 tyrants"<sup>8</sup> and handling the arguments that are concerned" with the historical and civilizational legacy bequeathed to the world by

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5. 481.

6. 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 Wilhelm Schmid–Otto Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur. Die nachklassische Periode der griechischen Literatur: Von 100 bis 539 nach Christus* (München: Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1981), 688 and Albin Lesky, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1973), 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.

7. It was this very formulation that influenced Karl Gerth's understanding of the Second Sophistic, as testified by his article "Die Zweite oder Neue Sophistik," in *RE*, Suppl. VIII (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1962), 725, otherwise essentially based on Paul Graindor's attitude expressed in his monograph *Un milliardaire antique: Hérode Atticus et sa famille* (Cairo: Imprimerie Misr, 1930) ix, 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 Wilhelm Kroll, "Rhetorik," in *RE*, Suppl. Bd. VII (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1940), 1039 ff.

8. *Lives of the Sophists*, 481. 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' *Lives of the Sophists* is borrowed from Wilmer Cave Wright's edition of the mentioned biographies (LCL 134).

the great personalities.<sup>9</sup> 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, as 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, 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.<sup>10</sup> 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, with the only difference between them consisting in the fact that the philosophical method resembles the prophetic art which is controlled by man, i.e., *logos*,<sup>11</sup> as distinguished from the sophistic one reminding him of the style used by oracles and soothsayers, who, to paraphrase the emblematic image of poet and rhapsode in Plato's *Ion*,<sup>12</sup> give an impression of being *automata*, or rather *channels* through which a deity utters

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9. *Lives of the Sophists*, 481. It is noteworthy to remark that the expression τὰς ἐς ὄνομα ὑποθέσεις was, as it seems, erroneously translated by Wilmer Cave Wright as "arguments that are concerned with the definite and special themes for which history shows the way." See Franco Montanari, *Vocabolario della lingua greca* (Torino: Loescher Editore, 2004) sv. ὄνομα (*ónoma*), where we encounter the meaning of *persona*, i.e. *personality*, fitting in this context.

10. *Lives of the Sophists*, 481.

11. *Lives of the Sophists*, 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."

12. 533d.

expressions and sentences in a flood of words.<sup>13</sup> 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, such as that of the winged chariot in *Phaedrus*,<sup>14</sup> 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*"<sup>15</sup> 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"<sup>16</sup> 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 introductory 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,<sup>17</sup> 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 unraveling the key message of Philostratus' *Lives*, which can only be achieved through the

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13. *Lives of the Sophists*, 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.

14. 244a-257b. On the interrelatedness of *λόγος* (*lógos*) and *μανία* (*manía*) in Plato's philosophy see attitudes taken by Giovanni Reale, *Platone* (Milano: Bompiani, 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."

15. *Lives of the Sophists*, 483.

16. *Ibid.*, 484.

17. Aeschines, "Against Timarchus," in *The Speeches of Aeschines* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1919), 173.

decipherment of symbols, or rather enigmas wrapped in the riddle of the arrangement of biographical material in the introductory passages from the mentioned work – something that can help us have a clear insight into whose attitude towards the sophistic was adopted by Philostratus.

### **The Symbolism in the Arrangement of the Biographical Material in the Introductory 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,<sup>18</sup> speaks clearly about how enigmatic every remark of Philostratus is, which was, as it seems, 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 body 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,<sup>19</sup> 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 introductory passages from Philostratus' *Lives*, namely on what is either omitted or suggested through barely detectable allusions.

The catalogue of both the properly and so-called sophists, as presented in the introductory passages from Philostratus' writing, is divided into two almost equal parts in which the arrangement plays a very important role. The first part, or rather group is made up of the names of the philosophers who expounded their theories

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18. *Lives of the Sophists*, 479.

19. *Ibid*, 546-566.

with ease and fluency of a rhetorician, whereas the second one is mainly composed of the exponents of the ancient sophistic. The catalogue of the philosopher opens with Eudoxus of Cnidus<sup>20</sup> followed by Leo of Byzantium,<sup>21</sup> Dias of Ephesus,<sup>22</sup> Carneades,<sup>23</sup> Philostratus the Egyptian<sup>24</sup> and Theomnestus of Naucratis,<sup>25</sup> with this brief survey ending in a section about Dio of Prusa<sup>26</sup> and Favorinus of Arelate<sup>27</sup> 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 end<sup>28</sup> of the list seems to have 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 the activity of all of the group's exponents is, with only one exception,<sup>29</sup> associated with the Academy which also had a strong influence on the teachings of Dio. 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 catalogue only after taking a closer look at the names of the authors classed among sophists in the other catalogue appearing in the introductory passages from Philostratus' *Lives*.

The last mentioned catalogue, 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,<sup>30</sup>

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20. Ibid, 484.

21. Ibid, 485.

22. Ibid, 486.

23. Ibid, 486.

24. Ibid, 486.

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

26. *Lives of the Sophists*, 487-488.

27. Ibid, 489-492.

28. This can be explained only 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 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."

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

30. *Lives of the Sophists*, 492-493.

Protagoras of Abdera,<sup>31</sup> Hippias of Elis,<sup>32</sup> Prodicus of Ceos,<sup>33</sup> Polus of Sicily,<sup>34</sup> Thrasymachus of Chalcedon,<sup>35</sup> Antiphon of Rhamnus,<sup>36</sup> Critias of Athens,<sup>37</sup> with this summary representation of facts ending, as in the previous case, in somewhat extensive passages dedicated to both Isocrates<sup>38</sup> and Aeschines<sup>39</sup> and their literary and rhetorical activity. At first sight, we would be tempted to say that this brief register is a true reflection of Philostratus' theses presented in the prologue to the 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 one, namely those of Gorgias and Aeschines, appear at the register's beginning and end. 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 catalogue seems to represent a curious optical illusion aimed at shrouding the essence of things in magic and mystery. This affords a welcome occasion for raising the question – on what do we base this assertion?

The parallelism of special places Dio and Isocrates occupy in the two brief catalogue 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 introductory 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 figures in both catalogues, 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*."

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31. Ibid, 494.

32. Ibid, 495.

33. Ibid, 496.

34. Ibid, 497.

35. Ibid, 497.

36. Ibid, 498-500.

37. Ibid, 501-503.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid, 507-510.



## 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*)]<sup>40</sup> and *dizziness* [ἰλιγγιῶ (*ilingiô*)],<sup>41</sup> blurring his eyes and, to put it with Krumbacher,<sup>42</sup> 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 *Lysis* with the aim to determine the nature of love in which the mentioned phenomenon ended up being paradoxically identified with hate itself.<sup>43</sup> 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 alternately used by Isocrates in the self-same meaning,<sup>44</sup> even in one and the same context in his

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40. Plato, *Lysis*, 222b: βούλεσθ' οὖν, ἐπειδὴ ὡς περ μεθύομεν ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου, συγχωρήσωμεν καὶ φῶμεν ἕτερόν τι εἶναι τὸ οἰκεῖον τοῦ ὁμοίου.

41. *Lysis*, 2216c: οὐκ οἶδα, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι αὐτὸς ἰλιγγιῶ ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ λόγου ἀπορίας...

42. Karl Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches* (München: Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1897/Byzantinisches Handbuch im Rahmen des Handbuchs der Altertumswissenschaft IX/1), 764/765, with reference made 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 ..."

43. Plato, *Lysis*, 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 ...

44. Isocrates, *Antidosis*, 209 (εἰκὴ καταφρονεῖν τῆς φιλοσοφίας); 215 (τοὺς οὐ καταφρονοῦντας μὲν τῆς φιλοσοφίας, πολὺ δὲ πικρότερον κατηγοροῦντας αὐτῆς); 220 (ὅτι σοφιστῆ μισθὸς κάλλιστος ἐστὶ καὶ μέγιστος); 243 (διεψευσμένοι τῆς φιλοσοφίας).

main work *Antidosis*,<sup>45</sup> where his own judicial procedure was, moreover, insistently identified with that of Socrates,<sup>46</sup> 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 *Antidosis* to denote the teachings of the Ionian philosophers<sup>47</sup> as well as those of the Seven Sages<sup>48</sup> and Solon himself,<sup>49</sup> 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 *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 formulation appearing in the prologue to his *Lives of the Sophists*, namely τὸς φιλοσοφήσαντας ἐν δόξει τοῦ σοφιστεῦσαι (*tous philosophésantas en dóxei tou sophsteúsai*), comes from *Antidosis* or, to be more precise, from 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

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

46. *Antidosis*, 15: "... although he alleges that I am able to make the weaker case appear the stronger ..." (See Plato, *Apology*, 19b); 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 ..." (See Plato, *Apology*, 17d).

47. *Antidosis*, 268 where Empedocles, Ion, Alcmeon, Parmenides and Melissus were characterized as "ancient sophists."

48. *Antidosis*, 235.

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

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 a line starting from Isocrates, leading further to Philostratus and ending with Eunapius. What we encounter in Dio's work, namely an interplay between reality and illusion expressing itself, unlike the play we face in Isocrates and Philostratus, in the enigmatic form of at first glance irreconcilable dichotomies, seems to have made things even worse in our attempt to decipher 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 essentially characterized by the above-mentioned 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. Even more than that, 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 *Antidosis*,<sup>50</sup> 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 spiritual phenomena such as the ancient sophistic and forensic oratory. What immediately springs to mind is the fact that Isocrates, just like Philostratus himself, looks upon 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 context already mentioned 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 both the nature and the aim of his method being now compared to the extremely painful training of the intellect<sup>51</sup> conducted by him with the purpose of making would-be adepts of rhetoric

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50. *Antidosis*, 209-211.

51. *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 ἀλίσκομένους (sc. τὰς τέχνας)], yet deny that they have any such power in the training of the intellect (πρὸς τὴν τῆς φρονήσεως ἄσκησιν)."

acquire full awareness of what is called *epiméleia*<sup>52</sup> and thus creating favourable conditions for implanting as easily as possible noble character traits, now equated with *kalokagathía*,<sup>53</sup> in their souls, with the method itself, in line of the above mentioned evidences concerning Isocrates' understanding of sophistic, being first characterized as philosophical (*philoponíai*)<sup>54</sup> and almost immediately thereafter as sophistical (*kalokagathía*).<sup>55</sup>

We have thus come into possession of three key coordinates which can easily be complemented by other ones having great associative potential and, due to that, being capable of additionally clarifying both Isocrates' understanding of the sophistic and the profound, philosophical dimension of his own 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 introductory and concluding passages from *Antidosis* speaks to the importance of the above-mentioned narrow context in achieving our objectives. The formulation appearing in the introductory 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,<sup>56</sup> and glorifying the power of philosophy,<sup>57</sup> unlike the latter equated with an all too easy “mental juggling” [τερατολογία (*teratologíai*)]<sup>58</sup> and closely associated with soft living<sup>59</sup> and pleasures of all kinds<sup>60</sup> – 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

52. *Antidosis*, 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 Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (4, 4, 5) as a legend of Socrates.

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

54. *Ibid*, 209.

55. *Ibid*, 220.

56. *Ibid*, 3.

57. *Ibid*, 10.

58. *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 ᾧ καὶ τῶν ἰδίων 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).

59. *Antidosis*, 286: ... ἐν συνουσίαις καὶ ἄθυμίαις καὶ παιδίαις ...

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

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*, with the analogy being therein drawn between cookery and rhetoric on one side, and gymnastics and legislature<sup>61</sup> on the other, as fake and genuine disciplines associated with the body and mind respectively, 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 (legislature). This gains in importance all the more so as 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 kinds,<sup>62</sup> is essentially based on Socrates' famous characterization of the sophistical rhetoric in *Gorgias* as a certain habitude producing a kind of gratification and pleasure.<sup>63</sup>

The other coordinate belonging to this additional group, namely *music*,<sup>64</sup> moves us even closer to our goal such as an accurate description of Isocrates' art, if we take into account the fact that it is in the prologue to *Phaedo*<sup>65</sup> that Socrates himself identifies his own way of living with music, 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 a paraphrase are characterized as a music, with the former being identified with the sublime one unlike 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.

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61. *Gorgias*, 464b; 465b.

62. *Antidosis*, 280. See n. 59.

63. *Gorgias*, 462c: χάριτος τινος καὶ ἡδονῆς ἀπεργασίας.

64. *Antidosis*, 47-48: ... οὐδ' (sc. Isocratis orationes) ἅπαντες ἂν φήσαιεν ὁμοιοτέρους εἶναι τοῖς μετὰ μουσικῆς καὶ ὑμῶν πεποιημένους. See among other passages from Eunapius' *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists* the following one (501-502): ὡς περ οὖν τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ γλυκύτερα τῶν μελῶν πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀκοὴν ἡμέρως καὶ πρῶως καταρρεῖ (sc. Chrysanthius' speech) ... καὶ ... πᾶσιν ἦν ἐναρμόνιος, καὶ τοσαύταις διαφοραῖς ἡθῶν ἐνέπρεπε καὶ καθηρμόζετο, modeled on Plato's *Phaedrus*, 271d.

65. 61a.

*Epiméleia* (“industry” or “suitable training”), along with *sophía* (“wisdom”), represents a key word of Socrates’ political testament given in bare outline in *Alcibiades* where both of them assume characteristics of the 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 as *epiméleia* acquires characteristics of a key word in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* as well, with *sophía* now yielding place to a more specific term, such as ἐγκράτεια (*enkráteia*– “contenance”), 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 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.<sup>66</sup> All of this gains in importance if we take into account that *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 ideas<sup>67</sup> but also as an expert in almost all practical disciplines such as military art,<sup>68</sup> home economics,<sup>69</sup> house-keeping,<sup>70</sup> doing sustainable business and account-keeping,<sup>71</sup> 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 back.<sup>72</sup>

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 *Alcibiades* and Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* as a legend of Socrates launched

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66. Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 4, 5, 11-12.

67. In this context, it deserves to be mentioned that Socrates is also represented by Xenophon as an expert in an entire field of fine and plastic arts in his conversations with Parrhasius the painter (3, 10, 2) and Cleiton the sculptor (3, 10, 5) – something that, along with the principles of the new rhetoric given in a bare outline in *Phaedrus* (266b), might have served as an initial basis for developing a theory of literary concept and, consequently, an enhanced ability to achieve creativity in one’s own writings, as practiced in later times such as those of the Second Sophistic.

68. Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 3, 1, 1-5.

69. Ibid, 2, 7.

70. Ibid, 2, 9.

71. Ibid, 2, 8.

72. Ibid, 2, 7, 1: χρῆ δὲ τοῦ βάρους μεταδιδόναι τοῖς φίλοις.

at the most suitable moment for putting the mentioned testament's key ideas into practice. Thus, we can see the stylistic and ideational timeline starting from Isocrates and leading 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 detail<sup>73</sup> with the aim to surpass, among other things, their master's legendary achievement during his military episode in ice-cold Potidea.<sup>74</sup> 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 the apparent external threat posed by the barbarian invasion but a very dangerous, universalistic-oriented enemy force such as Christian faith<sup>75</sup> 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 directed against the sophists and their activity seems to speak in support of the above, a polemics in 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"<sup>76</sup>,

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73. *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 482 (Aedesius), 492 (Prohaeresius), 500 (Chrysanthius).

74. Plato, *Symposium*, 220b: ἀνυπόδητος δὲ διὰ κρυστάλλου · ἄον ἐπορεύετο ἢ οἱ ἄλλοι ὑποδεδεμένοι.

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

76. Dio Chrysostom, *The Fourth Discourse on Kingship* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1940), 28.

“tricky fellows”<sup>77</sup>, “men attracting only simpletons,”<sup>78</sup> “lecherous eunuchs”<sup>79</sup> and “miserable creatures”<sup>80</sup> 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<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup>

Now a key question is being raised: which of the two sophistic movements is a controversial subject of his invective, the ancient or the new, i.e. that of Isocrates? If we start from the fact that in Dio’s two fairly brief “essays” on Homer and Socrates,<sup>83</sup> which are of the greatest importance in understanding 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 the 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 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 concerned.<sup>84</sup> Thus, we arrive to a conclusion that Dio’s tirades were

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77. Ibid, 32.

78. Ibid,35.

79. Ibid, 35.

80. Ibid, 38.

81. Ibid, 131.

82. Ibid, 34.

83. *Fifty-Fourth Discourse: On Socrates; Fifty-Fifth Discourse: On Homer and Socrates.*

84. Similar attitudes towards the sophists of his own time were also taken by Dio’s contemporary Plutarch, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry*, 43f, 48d where the exponents of the mentioned intellectual current are identified with the popular lecturers or 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.



directed against 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 philosophers<sup>85</sup> in Philostratus' *Lives*.

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 brief "essays" (or. 54 and 55) extolling Socrates' style<sup>86</sup> and highlighting close affinities between Homer and Socrates.<sup>87</sup> 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,"<sup>88</sup> 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.<sup>89</sup> In the latter in which close affinities between Homer and Socrates are advocated,<sup>90</sup> we come across a magic formula which was destined to be most carefully hidden during the whole time period in which the Second Sophistic existed as an intellectual current, and what it is all about is a fusion of Homeric imagery and 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 Homeric image, or be it that the latter was additionally elaborated so as to assume characteristics of the former.

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85. This can also be explained by the lack of enigma in the writings of Dio's maturity, which is 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*, *The Hall* and *To One who Said 'You're Prometheus in Words'*, he made publicly known key elements of his poetics in his literary canons appearing in *The Dance*, *Lexiphanes* and *Essays in Portraiture*.

86. *Fifty-Fourth Discourse: On Socrates*.

87. *Fifty-Fifth Discourse: On Homer and Socrates*.

88. *Fifty-Fourth Discourse: On Socrates*, 4. The English version of this and all of the following passages is borrowed from H. Lamar Crosby's edition of Dio's discourses (LCL).

89. *Ibid*, 1-2.

90. *Fifty-Fifth Discourse: On Homer and Socrates*, 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.

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, just 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 Scyllas and Cyclopes,<sup>91</sup> and this is, aside from the fusing of myth, history and fable<sup>92</sup> with each other, also true for Socrates’ living word characterized by an amazing mixture of the serious and the laughable.<sup>93</sup> We can rightly assume that these two brief “essays” on Homer and Socrates represent the author’s self-interpretation in so far as Dio, following the example already set by Socrates, says things concerning his poetics in a roundabout way while expounding his views on the mentioned authors’ stylistic features.<sup>94</sup> Synesius himself seems to have deliberately overlooked these two instances of Dio’s self-interpretation so as to be in a position to fabricate the thesis according to which Dio was a sophist in his early period,<sup>95</sup> 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.<sup>96</sup> In line of the above mentioned evidences, we can rightly assume that Dio handled even the trivial topics such as encomia on gnat, parrot<sup>97</sup> 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 brief “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 just

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91. *Fifty-Fifth Discourse: On Homer and Socrates*, 10.

92. *Ibid.*, 11. The fable (*fabula*) is, as it seems, implicitly, present in Dio’s formulation.

93. *Fifty-Fifth Discourse: On Homer and Socrates*, 11.

94. Aldo Brancacci, “Struttura compositiva e fonti della terza orazione ‘Sulla regalità’ di Dione Crisostomo,” in *ANRW II*, 36, 5 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992), 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.

95. Synesius, *Dio*, 1, 35 ff., re-edited in the fifth volume of H. Lamar Crosby’s edition of Dio’s discourses (LCL) under the title *Testimony regarding Dio’s Life and Writings*, 368.

96. Synesius, *Dio* in *Testimony regarding Dio’s Life and Writings*, 372.

97. See Synesius, *Dio* in *Testimony regarding Dio’s Life and Writings*, 372: ... φησί (sc. Philostratus) ... σοφιστοῦ γὰρ εἶναι μηδὲ τούτων ὑπεριδεῖν.

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. The absence of "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, as it seems, 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 fact itself 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 introductory passages from Alcibiades' discourse in the *Symposium*<sup>98</sup> where Socrates' speech is compared not only to the song of the Sirens but also to the rhythms of the corybantic élan,<sup>99</sup> 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*, where Socrates' art of speaking was compared to the potions (φίλτρα - *phíltra*), spells (ἐπωδαί-*epodai*) and magical wheels, i.e., ἴνγκες (*inynges*)<sup>100</sup> as well as, though implicitly, to the song of the Sirens,<sup>101</sup> 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.

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 introductory 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 the brief catalogue of the sophists of an earlier period could be regarded as the most illustrative example of disguise as a device in his narrative, a substitution that seems to have been created with the aim to

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98.215e.

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

100. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3, 11, 16-17.

101. *Ibid*, 2, 6, 16.

give the false impression of Aeschines as being the founder of the intellectual current known as the Second Sophistic. The fact itself that Philostratus links Isocrates' art closely to the dance by using the term κρότος (*krótos*)<sup>102</sup> 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,<sup>103</sup> 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, first of all 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<sup>104</sup> with far-reaching negative consequences as far as subsequent research phases are concerned.<sup>105</sup> 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 sophistical but rather Socratic legacy, including that of style and method, and, above all, to imitate 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

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102. *Lives of the Sophists*, 503.

103. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 279a-b.

104. Erwin Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1914).

105. 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 Bryan P. Reardon, *Courants littéraires grecs des II<sup>e</sup> III<sup>e</sup> siècles après J.-C.* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971) can be adduced as a telling example of just how fatal relying on the representation of the phenomenon in Rohde was.

the case of Rohde himself who, due to his methodological shortcomings, ignored Eunapius' writing because of its alleged barbarian nature.<sup>106</sup> As distinguished 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 additional elaboration of detail borrowed from his models. To tell the truth, Eunapius was obliged by circumstances to adopt this kind of approach just 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 consisting in elaborating the detail in the pattern 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<sup>107</sup> speak volumes about the author's use of enigma acquiring truly magical powers, as exemplified below.

What is referred to here is Iamblichus' divinatory power, which can be regarded as a clear reflection of attitudes taken by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*<sup>108</sup> 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 formulation in *Phaedrus*<sup>109</sup> essentially based on a Homeric line.<sup>110</sup>

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

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106. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*, 1914, 386.

107. *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 458, 459.

108. 1, 4, 17-18.

109. 266b–c: ἐάν τε τιν' ἄλλον ἠγήσωμαι δυνατὸν εἰς ἓν καὶ ἐπὶ πολλὰ πεφυκόθ' ὄραν, τοῦτον διώκω κατόπισθε μετ' ἵχνιον ὥστε θεοῖο.

110. *The Odyssey*, 5, 193.

becoming immovable<sup>111</sup> immediately before his arrival at the banquet already unfolding in Agathon's house to a diametrically opposed context such as a funeral, a motif we often come across in Greek literature,<sup>112</sup> speaks volumes about elaborating the details borrowed from the pattern. 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<sup>113</sup> 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* – in which Eros is represented as a being of fit proportion<sup>114</sup> 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'<sup>115</sup> and, above all, Socrates' discourse in the *Symposium*.<sup>116</sup> 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.

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111. Plato, *Symposium*, 174d-175c. In comparison, it is worth mentioning that W. C. Wright regards it as an echo of *Phaedo*, 64b.

112. See among other works Philostratus, *Imagines*, 2, 10 (Kassandra), modeled on *Odyssey*, 11, 472 ff, the introductory scene from Heliodorus' novel, Lucian's satirical writing *The Carousal or the Lapiths* as well as the frequent turning of what is called the symposium of happiness into one of misfortune in Prodromus' novel *Rodanthe and Dosicles*, 8, 232-241; 8, 391-396; 8, 470-479; 9, 390-394.

113. *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 459.

114. *Symposium*, 196a.

115. *Symposium*, 180c-e.

116. 203b-e.

### 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 *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, consisting in helping 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 magic to the scarce material being 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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