

## Symbols, Enigmas, Political Allusions and the Legend of Socrates in Dio Chrysostom's *Olympic Discourse*

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*Close analysis of the Olympic Discourse showed a wealth of detail, thanks to which we were able to see the poetics of the great orator of Prusa in a new light and in all its aspects, with those political and strategic, otherwise overlooked in previous research on the subject, gaining in importance, in so far as it turned out that Dio felt a deep aversion to Roman rule and hence aspired to a noble mission to join in the project of putting into practice the key ideas of Socrates' political testament in the Alcibiades, thus following the example set a long time before by both Xenophon and Isocrates, the testament's first executors. Close analysis has also shown that the literary aspect of Dio's poetics is, too, essentially based on the legend of Socrates, as evidenced by the fact that the entire discourse might be characterized as a detailed elaboration of the theses on art, succinctly outlined in Socrates' conversations with the major exponents of painting and sculpture of his own time in Xenophon's Memorabilia. The fact that both the beginning and the end of the Olympic Discourse are marked by meaning- and symbol-laden admonitions, standing in sharp contrast to a serene and solemn atmosphere of the festival and moreover closely associated with the mentioned testament, clearly speaks of Dio's impressive sense of composition. Method used in this study is essentially based on combining together evidence provided in both Dio's three largely disparate writings (two short essays on Socrates and Homer and the Olympic discourse) and Isocrates' Panathenaicus with the aim of decoding the author's poetics and, by the same token, the true nature of the Second Sophistic.*

### Introduction: The Importance and the Mystical Beauty of Dio's *Olympic Discourse*

*The Twelfth or Olympic Discourse on Man's First Conception of God*<sup>1</sup> stands out from the corpus of Dio's orations not only through its mystical beauty but also through the wealth of details shedding light on both the author's poetics and his attitudes towards the new sophistic, which in itself is the biggest gain when it comes to our understanding of not only the last mentioned phenomenon but also

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1. For the most important study editions and translations of the discourse see Hans-Joseph Klauck, *Dion von Prusa, 'Olympikōj À per' tÁj prèthj toà qeoà' TMno...aj / Olympische Rede oder über die erste Erkenntnis Gottes*, eingeleitet, übersetzt und interpretiert vom Autor, mit einem archäologischen Beitrag von Balbina Bäbler, Dramstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000 (SAPERE Bd. 2), 31-32. Hereinafter referred to as H.-J. Klauck, *Dion von Prusa*.

of post-classical Greek literature as a whole. To tell the truth, Dio's fifty-fourth<sup>2</sup> and fifty-fifth discourse<sup>3</sup> also provide details of the author's self-interpretation that have escaped, time and again, researchers' attention on account of their small size reminiscent of a fairly brief essay with all the negative consequences for our understanding of both the philosophical and the strategic aspects of Dio's poetics. Paradoxically enough, the mentioned aspects could be regarded as more important than those literary, as will be seen shortly.

Aside from invective against sophists, what characterizes these two discourses is a nonchalant essay form, due to which they seem to have little if anything in common with the *Olympic Discourse* and, as we will see shortly, its mystical and enigmatic beauty. But appearances are deceptive, in so far as gaining a full picture of the author's poetics was only possible by putting together and combining with each other the details appearing in these three largely disparate discourses if viewed solely in terms of a pure form. The fact that the three mentioned discourses differ widely in terms of the form of expression which is explicit in the essays on Socrates and Homer, as opposed to the *Olympic Discourse*<sup>4</sup> where it is laden with symbols the unravelling of which is a necessary prerequisite to notice the link connecting all three of them in a meaningful whole, also speaks of the great difficulty of the challenge faced by the researcher.

There is yet another far from being insignificant difference between the mentioned discourses, as evident from the fact that the *Olympic Discourse* has attracted to a much greater extent than the two short essays the attention of the researchers,<sup>5</sup> with some of them driven by the belief that the theory of the cult

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2. *On Socrates*.

3. *On Homer and Socrates*.

4. It is worth noting that Isocrates published his *Panegyricus* about 380 BC, with the title chosen by him to signify the oration's appropriateness to be delivered before a pan-Hellenic gathering, "where Gorgias (408 BC) and Lysias (384 BC) had actually spoken on the same theme before him" and Dio. Cf. George Norlin's *General introduction* to his study edition of Isocrates' discourses, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 1, xxxv.

5. Cf. I. Chirassi, "Il significato religioso del XII discorso di Dione Crisostomo," *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale* 5 (1963), 266-285; P. Desideri, "Il Dione e la politica di Sinesio" in *Atti della Accademia delle scienze di Torino, classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, 107 (1972/1973), 551-593; Id., "Religione e politica nel Olimpico di Dione," *Quaderni storici* 15 (1980), 141-161; Klaus Döring, *Exemplum Socratis; Studien zur Sokratesnachwirkung in der kynisch-stoischen Popularphilosophie der frühen Kaiserzeit und im frühen Christentum* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag 1979-Hermes Einzelschriften); C. Ehemann, "Die XII. Rede des Dion Chrysostomos" (Program des K. Humanistischen Gymnasiums Kaiserslautern), Kaiserslautern 1895; A. S. Ferguson, "Dion Chrysostom, Or. XII. 44," *The Classical Review* 38 (1924), 15-16; B. F. Harris, "The Olympian Oration of Dio Chrysostom," *Journal of Religious History* 2 (1962), 85-97; F. Jouan, "Les récits de voyage de Dion Chrysostome: réalité et fiction" in M. F. Baslez (ed.), *L'invention de l'autobiographie d'Hésiode à saint Augustin* (Études de littérature ancienne), Paris 1993, 189-198; H. D. Betz, *Parainesis and the Concept of God according to Oratio XII (Olympikos) of Dio of Prusa* (Berlin: De

image<sup>6</sup> in the Greek art of the classical, but not only the classical period, can be derived from the aforesaid oration. It goes without saying that Dio's discourse should not be used as a source for such research since the author's key attitudes towards art are also laden with symbols, which means that the mentioned oration should essentially be regarded as a symbolist work, as can be inferred, among other things, from the fact that for Dio, as is the case for his master Socrates, fine and plastic arts are nothing other than a metaphor for literature, as we shall see later.

Thus both the composition of our study and presentation of facts suggest themselves in so far as the content of the two mentioned short essays is a necessary prerequisite for unravelling not only the symbols, enigmas and allusions but also the poetics and composition of Dio's *Olympic Discourse* whose final message will, not without a big surprise, lead us on to Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades* as a prime mover of all his aspirations including those literary and political. Therefore we shall give a brief summary of both the content and messages conveyed by the mentioned essays.

The importance of Dio's 54<sup>th</sup> discourse is reflected in the fact that we find in it a new detail of major significance when it comes to his confrontation with the sophistic, which in some of his orations, such as those on kingship, assumes characteristics of hostility to such an extent that he, like the two greatest exponents of the forensic oratory, Demosthenes and Aeschines, in their mutual conflicts, does not hesitate to use hurtful terms<sup>7</sup> to describe the mentioned sophists and thus once for all to discredit their legacy into which, it seemed, it was impossible to breathe new life, and under whose ashes no fire appeared to be smoldering.

Such an attitude towards the sophistic was an enigma in so far as Dio often uses the term 'sophist' in a specific historical context, as was otherwise the case with his discourses on kingship, as a result of which it appeared at first sight to be in no way possible to ascertain whether the author was perchance alluding to the new sophistic, i.e. the one of his own time. If that be the case, we would be facing one of the greatest enigmas, otherwise passed over in silence in previous research

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Gruyter, 2004); M. Mortenthaler, "Der *Olympikos* des Dion von Prusa als literarhistorisches und geistesgeschichtliches Dokument," Diss. phil. Wien 1979.

6. Cf. H. Schrader, "Dio Chrysostomos über den Zeus von Phidias, in *Das Werk des Künstlers* 1 (1939/40), 197-214; S. Ferri, "Il Discorso di Fidia in Dione Chrisostomo-Saggio su alcuni concetti artistici del V secolo," *Annali di Scuola normale superiore di Pisa-classe di lettere* 2 (1936), 237-266.

7. Cf. *Fourth Discourse on Kingship* where sophists are characterized as 'ignorant' (28), 'tricky fellows' (32), 'men attracting only simpletons and fools' (35), 'lecherous eunuchs' (35), 'miserable creatures' (38), and, moreover, compared with a 'monstrous brood of the Centaurs' (130), and 'unruly and untrained dogs deceiving others in the hunting' (34).

on the subject,<sup>8</sup> as shown by the fact that one of the major, if not the greatest, exponents of the Second Sophistic would turn out to be its bitter enemy, something that calls into question Philostratus' view of the phenomenon according to which there is no meaningful difference between the old and the new sophistic,<sup>9</sup> so that, in his view, an equals-sign can with good reason be set between them.

We come across almost the same enigma in Dio's 32<sup>th</sup> or *Alexandrian Discourse* where by using of the term 'sophist' the author definitely refers to the circumstances of his own time,<sup>10</sup> but if we have in mind the author's predilection for using, like a comic poet, both mocking qualifiers and hurtful terms in confrontation with his rivals, we can almost never be sure as to whether the mentioned term is being employed as a synonym for all that can be characterized as the denial of both true philosophy and true rhetoric or we are dealing here with invective against the Second Sophistic as an intellectual current.

It is none other than the *Olympic Discourse* that may help us solve the mentioned puzzle since in it the term 'sophistes' relates unequivocally to Dio's contemporaries, exponents of the Second Sophistic, who are likened with bitter irony to gorgeous peacocks<sup>11</sup> on account of their gaudily and proud appearance and their flaunting success—in sharp contrast to the author himself who claims to profess no art or special knowledge either of the noble or the meaner sort,<sup>12</sup> nor to

8. The fact that Dio's attitude towards sophistic is wholly negative, as can be inferred from the index provided by H. Lamar Crosby in his study edition of the author (LCL), has been passed over lightly in previous research on the subject.

9. *Lives of the Sophists*, 481: <sup>1</sup> dè met' <sup>TM</sup>ke...nhn, ÷n oÛc<sup>^</sup> nšan, çrcafa gfr, deutšran dè m©llon prošrtšon.

10. *To the People of Alexandria*, 39: deino<sup>^</sup> g'r <sup>TM</sup>ke...noi ka<sup>^</sup> megfloi sofista<sup>^</sup> ka<sup>^</sup> g'òhtej: t| d' 'mštera faàla ka<sup>^</sup> pez| <sup>TM</sup>n toçj l'ògoij. The ancient sophistic is similarly characterized as an 'easy mental juggling' (teratolog...a) by Isocrates in the *Antidosis* (284-285: toÝj dè tìn mèn çnagka...wn çmeloàntaj, t|j dè tìn palaiìn sofistùn teratolog...aj çgapîntaj filosofe<sup>^</sup>n fasin, çll' oÛ toÝj t| toiaàta mançfontaj ka<sup>^</sup> meletîntaj <sup>TM</sup>x in ka<sup>^</sup> tìn ÷dion oïkon ka<sup>^</sup> t| koin| t| tÁj p'òlewj kalij dioik»sousi), where we encounter the wording reminiscent of that used in the famous passages from the legend of Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (2, 7, 1; 2, 7, 7-10; 3, 1, 1-5). This enables us to establish a stylistics- and history of ideas-related timeline starting from Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades*, passing through Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and leading to Dio Chrysostom. Similar attitudes towards the sophists of his own time were also taken by Dio's contemporary Plutarch, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* (*De audiendis poetis*), 43f, 48d where the exponents of the mentioned intellectual current are identified with 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.

11. *Olympic Discourse*, 5: æj dè ka<sup>^</sup> Ømeçj tosaàta mèn qaÛmata œcontej terpn£, tosaàta dè çkoÛsmata, toàto mèn »toraj deinoÛj ... toàto dè yuggrafšaj <sup>1</sup>d...stouj ... toàto dè, æj taij poik...louj, polloÝj sofistçj, d'òxei ka<sup>^</sup> maqhtaçj <sup>TM</sup>pairomšnouj oïon pteroçj ...

12. *Ibid.*, 15: <sup>TM</sup>spoudfkate çndr'òj çkoàsai ... oÛte kaloà t'ò eïdoj oÛte „scuroà, tí te <sup>1</sup>lik...v parhkmak'òtoj ½dh, maqht<sup>3</sup>/4n dè oÛdšna œcontoj, tšcnhn dè À <sup>TM</sup>pist»mhn oÛdem...an

be a clever writer<sup>13</sup> at all in so far as he lacks the ability to handle his themes according to the rules of art (*kat' t̄schen*),<sup>14</sup> as a result of which he is left with only one possibility, i.e. to attract attention of the inquisitive and curious festival visitors by simply wearing his hair long.<sup>15</sup>

Thus we have achieved a result of great significance for contesting the validity of Philostratus' identification of the new sophistic with the old, but, no matter how paradoxical it may sound, we would not get a lot out of it if in the mentioned passage we failed to notice expression of enormous hermeneutical potential. They are difficult to notice, however, due to not only Dio's self-deprecating references to his rhetorical skills, but also to the fact that the expression *lack of both art skills and special knowledge of even the meaner sort* did not seem at first sight to possess some higher meaning.

We can find it only in a roundabout way, that is to say, by linking the mentioned expressions with the attitudes taken by Dio in his 54<sup>th</sup> discourse which is, as already said, a short essay on Socrates. In it Socrates' speeches are compared to those of the sophists with the purpose of pointing out the curious paradox that there is nothing remaining of the writings of the sophists but their name alone<sup>16</sup> despite the fact that the mentioned writings were carefully written down and, if I may add, composed according to the rules of the art of rhetoric, as opposed to the words of Socrates which "for some strange reason still endure and will endure for all time, although he himself did not write or leave behind him either a treatise or a will."<sup>17</sup>

Øpiscnoumšnou scedŃn oŮte t̄n semn̄n oŮte t̄n <sup>TM</sup>lattŃnwn, oŮte mantik̄¼n oŮte sofistik̄»n, çll' oŮdè ·htorik̄»n tina À kolakeutik̄¼n dŮnam̄n.

13. Ibid.: oŮtedeinoà xuggr̄fein (sc. <sup>TM</sup>spoudf̄kate çndr̄Ńj çkoàsai).

14. This detail enables us to see more clearly how Philostratus (*Lives of the Sophists*, 481) enveloped the phenomenon of the Second Sophistic in an aura of mystery by saying that Aeschines, after he had been exiled from the political life at Athens, founded it by way of handling his themes according to the rules of the art of rhetoric—in sheer contrast to Gorgias and his followers who handled theirs as they pleased, i.e. trusting to the inspiration of the moment.

15. Ibid.: çll' À mŃnon kom̄ntoj (sc. <sup>TM</sup>spoudf̄kate çndr̄Ńj çkoàsai).

16. As a proof of this Dio indicates the fact that the speeches of Socrates' rivals, the ancient sophists, were devoid of even the slightest sense, owing their genesis to their authors' base motives to make money and please simpletons and fools. Cf. *Or.* 54 (*On Socrates*), 1-2: ælegon dè polloŮj mèn lŃgouj, noàn dè oŮk æcontaj oŮdè bracŮn.

17. *Fifty-Fourth Discourse: On Socrates*, 4: ... t̄n mèn qaumazomšnwn <sup>TM</sup>ke...nwn sofist̄n <sup>TM</sup>klelo...pasin of lŃgoi... of dè toà Swkr̄t̄ouj diamšnoui ka^ diamenoàsi tŃn çpanta crŃnon, toŮtou mèn aŮtoà gr̄f̄yant̄oj oŮte grama... Cf. also the analogy drawn between meat, salt and the Socratic grace in Dio's eighteenth discourse *On Training* (13): "For just as no meat without salt will be gratifying to the taste, so no branch of literature, as it seems to me, could possibly be pleasing to the ear if it lacked the Socratic grace." The English version of this and all other passages from Dio's discourses is borrowed from J. W. Cohoon and H. Lamar Crosby's study edition of Dio's discourses (LCL).

Hereby Dio declared himself follower of Socrates' key thesis on the superiority of the living word over every form of script and writing, as expressed in the famous passages from the *Phaedrus*,<sup>18</sup> which points to the conclusion that the central principles of the new rhetoric, the analytical partition of the phenomenon (*diairesis*) and the synoptic reduction of the partitioned to a single idea (*synagoge*), otherwise reminiscent of *montage*, and an object of philosophical discussion in the second, analytical part of the mentioned dialogue,<sup>19</sup> became a guiding idea of not only Dio but also of all the major exponents of the Second Sophistic. It can be clearly seen that when Dio speaks of his lack of art skills (i.e. those rhetorical) as well as of his limited special knowledge of even the meaner sort how subtle are his ways of being indirect, with his self-deprecation imperceptibly turning into heavy sarcasm, as shown by the fact that he was not at all interested in sophistic *techné*, or rather the rules of the art on account of its impotence and ineffectiveness in confrontation with the magic of Socrates' living word.

This explains why in a number of his discourses he takes disparaging attitudes towards the sophistic and why in the mentioned irony-based passage he borrows the key term (*kolakeia*)<sup>20</sup> from Socrates' definition of rhetoric in the *Gorgias*,<sup>21</sup> where it is identified with flattery of various kinds,<sup>22</sup> as yet another way to hint at his identification with his master, as shall be seen below. This should serve as a warning to all those who, as was otherwise the case with Rohde<sup>23</sup> and von Arnim,<sup>24</sup> look the major exponents of the so-called Second Sophistic through the prism of the ancient to revise their theses among other things because the poetics of almost the entire post-classical Greek literature depends heavily on the new sophistic.

As distinguished from the 54<sup>th</sup> discourse which contains, as already said, important prerequisites for ascertaining Dio's relationship towards not only the old but also, as things stand, the new sophistic, in the 55<sup>th</sup> discourse we encounter the central principles—chiefly epigrammatical in nature—of the author's poetics which could rightly be regarded as the poetics of all the major exponents of the

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18. 274e-279b.

19. 265c-266e.

20. Cf. n. 12: kolakeutiká n d'únamin.

21. 463a-b: *dokéō to...nun moi eína... ti tē pithanē de ma technēn mēn oū, yucāj dē stocastikāj ka' qndre...aj ka' fūsei deināj prosomile n to j qnqrēpoij: kalī dē aūtōa tē gē tō kefflaion kolake...an.*

22. It should be noted that the term *kolakeia* is as a rule wrongly interpreted and translated, instead of *gratification of whims and desires* including those perverse, as 'flattery,' as pointed out by G. Reale, *Platone, Gorgia* (Milano: Bompiani 2001), 322, n. 51.

23. The famous chapter "Die griechische Sophistik der Kaiserzeit" of his influential monograph *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1914), 310-387.

24. *Leben und Werke des Dio von Prusa mit einer Einleitung: Sophistik, Rhetorik, Philosophie in ihrem Kampf um die Jugendbildung* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1898).

Second Sophistic, as will be seen later. It is in the latter that striking similarity between Socrates and Homer is advocated, as evident, in Dio's view, from 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,<sup>25</sup> and were, furthermore, most "effective at making similes, comparisons" and analogies, as exemplified by Homer's seemingly trivial analogies with starlings, daws, locusts, a firebrand, ashes, beans and chickpeas which have the same, if not greater, importance in his work than his similes with the almighty creatures of both wild life and myth, such as lions and eagles or Scylla and Cyclopes,<sup>26</sup> which is also true of Socrates' tendency to draw not only analogies with the potters, cobblers and the animal world but also to compare none other than himself to animals grazing on the pasture in the prologue to the *Phaedrus*.<sup>27</sup>

If it seems that we stand to gain much from this as far as our final objectives are concerned, the appearances are deceptive since in this short essay we encounter the facts that will lead us on to the very core of not only Dio's poetics but also that of all the other major exponents of the Second Sophistic. What we are referring to is yet another striking similarity between Homer and Socrates which, according to Dio, springs from the basic principle of their poetics such as the fusing of myth, history<sup>28</sup> and fable<sup>29</sup> with each other in a harmonious whole, that is, in such a way that the human eye, in the words of Philostratus,<sup>30</sup> is not at all capable of discerning where myth ends and where history begins and vice

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25. *Fifty-Fifth Discourse: On Homer and Socrates*, 9: ... Øpèr tîn aÚtîn ™spoudazšthn ka ™legšthn, Ð mèn di! tÁj poi»sewj, Ð dè katalogédhn.

26. *Ibid.*, 10: ... tîn `Om»rou t! toiaàta çpodokimfzej, Ópou mšmnhtai yarîn À koloíñ À çkr...dwn À daloà À tšfraj À kułmwn te ka ™reb...nqwn ... mÒnouj dè qaumfzej toÝj lšontaj ka toÝj çetoÝj (sc.aÚtoà). Dio's praises of the hair, parrot and gnat, of which only the first mentioned has survived, can be explained by his enthusiasm for these 'trivial' comparisons and analogies, or, in other words, for Socratic and Homeric style, namely praises that, under the influence of Philostratus (*Lives of the Sophists*, 487) and, above all, Synesius (*Dio*, 1, 35 ff), provided a strong argument for setting up crude dichotomies within Dio's oeuvre and claiming that he was a sophist in his early period, only to recant these youthful beliefs and become a philosopher in the years of his maturity.

27. 230d-e.

28. *Fifty-Fifth Discourse: On Homer and Socrates*, 10: ..."Omhroj dił te mÚqwn ka fstor...aj ™pece...rhse toÝj çnqrèpouj paidèÚein ... ka Swkrfthj pollfkij ™crÁto tù toioÚTj ...

29. The fable is, it seems, implicitly, present in Dio's formulation, all the more so since the fable, as we shall see later, is one of the most important structural elements of his *Olympic Discourse*.

30. *Imagines*, 2, 2, 4 (*Education of Achilles*) with the reference to the dual nature of the Centaurs: çll! †ppon çnqrèpJ sumbaleçn qaàma oÚdšn, sunaleçyai m³n ka ~nìsai ka diadoànai ¥mfw l»gein ka ¥rcesqai ka diafeÚgein toÝj ÑfqalmoÝj e., tÕ tšrma toà çnqrèpou ™lšgcoien.

versa, of which Socrates' explicit identification of *logos* with *mythos* in the *Gorgias*<sup>31</sup> could have also served as a model.

### **Dio's Short Essays on Socrates and Isocrates' "Palinody" in the *Panathenaicus* or What Makes a Writer Immortal?**

In line with these findings, it should be logical to ask ourselves as to whether what we are dealing with here are Dio's own ideas, or rather his dependence upon the great authorities of earlier times. On account of the fact that in the *Gorgias* we encounter explicit identification of the categories of narration, such as *logos* and *mythos*, with each other, it should also be logical to assume that Dio's model would be found in Plato's own times. And indeed the finding itself surpassed our expectations in so far as it pointed to the project of strategic importance, otherwise closely related to Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades*<sup>32</sup> and being already fully implemented in Plato's time, with Dio himself following suit some four centuries later. Who we are talking about here is none other than Isocrates, Socrates' or rather Plato's favourite orator,<sup>33</sup> in whose *Panathenaicus*<sup>34</sup> we encounter terms and expressions which, similar though they are to those used by Dio, were too hard to recognize as such in so far as Dio modified them with the aim to disguise his dependence on the great master who was honoured to be one of the key executors of the mentioned testament<sup>35</sup> launched, as it seems, immediately after the death of Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* which can rightly be regarded as a legend of Socrates.<sup>36</sup>

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31. 523a: Ἐκουε δὲ ¼ ... μὴ ἀλοῦν τὸ ὄγον, ὄν σὺ μὲν ἴσως μακρόν, ἀεὶ τῷ ὄντι οἶμαι, τῷ ὄντι δὲ τὸ ὄγον ἀεὶ ἐλπίσθαι ἄρ' ὄντα σοὶ ἴσως ἢ μὴ ἴσως.

32. 123c-124b, where a stress is laid on *sophia* and *epimeleia* referred to as the only forces capable of both countering the mighty barbarian elements and their uncouth military power and guaranteeing successful confrontation with them. That the mentioned political manifesto also had the literary dimension can be inferred from the fact that Socrates himself unreservedly recommended the ethical-political aspect of his teaching (105d) to his interlocutor Alcibiades as a literary and philosophical basis of his own testament.

33. Cf. *Phaedrus*, 279a where Socrates is predicting a great future for Isocrates by stating that all who have ever treated of rhetoric shall seem less than children compared to him because something of philosophy is inborn in his mind. It is also worth mentioning that Isocrates is regarded by none other than Aristotle as the major exponent of oratory. Cf., among other passages from *Art of Rhetoric*, that from the third book (17, 10).

34. 246.

35. What enables us to conclude that is the fact that *sophia* and *epimeleia*, as crucial terms of Socrates' testament in the *Alcibiades*, are also key words of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, the only difference being that *sophia* as a more general term yields its place to a more specific one, i.e. *enkrateia*, since the latter represents the quintessence of wisdom in Xenophon's interpretation of Socrates' teachings. The same holds true for Isocrates whose



We find a fact of paramount importance for shedding further light on Dio's attitudes towards both Homeric and Socratic poetics at the height of the *Panathenaicus* or, to be more precise, in a passage where Isocrates' masterful, erudite and controlled expositions start to assume features of drama, and what is being referred to here is a moment when the author, due to his having spoken of Sparta with, as it seemed to him, extreme bitterness and the lack of moderation, faces a dilemma as to whether to burn what he had written<sup>37</sup> or use a palinode, just like Socrates did in the *Phaedrus*, to recant what he had said. To tell the truth, what we are dealing with here is not the true palinode, but something that can be regarded as Isocrates' invention, that is, a mere attempt at recantation, and yet highly uncommon in so far as we encounter it almost at the very end of the *Panathenaicus*, as was otherwise the case with Aristides who takes it one step further, placing his fairly brief and almost unnoticeable palinode at the very end of his lengthy first Platonic discourse, entitled *In Defense of Oratory*,<sup>38</sup> with fatal consequences for researchers, as it has led them to overlook the author's key message<sup>39</sup> and thus erroneously interpret<sup>40</sup> his important treatise ever since the inception of research.

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poetics is essentially determined by the mentioned key words, as can be inferred from the author's self-interpretation in the *Antidosis* (209-211). Cf. our studies: "ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΗΣΑΝΤΕΣ ΕΝ ΔΟΞΗΙ ΤΟΥ ΣΟΦΙΣΤΕΥΣΑΙ: An Enigmatic Depiction of the Second Sophistic or What is Indeed the Mentioned Sophistic?," *Athens Journal of Philosophy* 1 (2022), 51-70; "Philosophical plasma in Dio Chrysostom's Fourth Discourse on Kingship and Socrates' Political Testament in Alcibiades," *Athens Journal of Humanities and Arts* 10 (2022), 1-36; "Aristides' Criticism (or. 2) of Plato's Attitudes towards Oratory and its Hidden Meaning—accepted for publication in *Athens Journal of Philosophy*. The last mentioned paper provides ample evidence that Aristides, contrary to what was thought, was, too, deeply influenced by both the principles of the new rhetoric in the *Phaedrus* and the legend of Socrates.

36. In Xenophon's work, not only was Socrates represented as a true connoisseur of the intelligible world of ideas but also as an expert in almost all practical disciplines such as military art (3, 1-5), home economics (2, 7-2, 8), house-keeping (2, 9-2, 10), doing sustainable business and account-keeping (2, 8), with his solidarity with all the members of the community standing out from the rest for its importance and going so far as to induce him to not only help others with his advice, but also to carry like an athlete their own burden on his back (2, 7, 1). That's why Xenophon's account of Socrates assumes characteristics of a legend.

37. *Panathenaicus*, 232: οὐ γὰρ μετρήσῃσι τοῖς κακοῖσι μοι δεισιφάνει ἄλκιον (sc. Lakedaimoniwn) οὐδέ τι δῆμον οὐδέ τι νόμιμον, οἷον ἔστιν ἅπαντα καὶ ἰσχυρὰ πικρὰ ἐστὶν ἀπολόγησιν οὐδὲν ἀκατάφητον μετέστιν ἁπλοῦς, τὸ μὲν τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ καὶ τὸ πρὸς τὸν λόγον ἀναντιρρητικόν.

38. 462-466.

39. *In Defense of Oratory*, 466: παρὰ δὲ τῆς ἁπλοῦς ἑξήκωθεν ἡ δεισιφάνεια... ἡ δὲ ἐξήκωθεν, τὸ ἴδιον λογιστικὸν οὐχ ἐπέκεινται, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὸ πλεονέκτημα...

40. Cf. among others Jacques Bompaigne, *Lucien écrivain. Imitation et création* (Paris: de Boccard, 1958), Antonio Dittadi, "Difesa della retorica e 'riscrittura' di Platone nei *Discorsi*

Overlooking Isocrates' attempt at palinode also turned out to have fatal consequences for scholars in so far as the mentioned author's aesthetic criteria and, by the same token, the magical beauty of his *Panathenaicus* could not be perceived, which, in the last analysis, has the same effect as inability to understand the final message of a literary work. In the said palinode, Isocrates' pupil, most likely Theopompus,<sup>41</sup> in a kind of a critical assessment of his master's discourse speaks out his opinion on it by saying that the discourse "will appear to be ingenuous and easy to comprehend to all those who read it casually, though to those who scan it thoroughly and endeavour to see in it what has escaped all others it will reveal itself as difficult and hard to understand, packed with history and philosophy, and filled with all manners of devices and fictions—not the kind of myths and fictions which, used with evil intent, are wont to injure one's fellow-citizens, but the kind which, used by the cultivated mind, are able to benefit or to delight one's audience."<sup>42</sup>

We can clearly see that Isocrates uses certain terms otherwise lacking in Dio's 55<sup>th</sup> discourse, such as *philosophia* and *pseudologia*, but, despite all this, it is not difficult to infer that *mythos* (*fabula*) and *plasma* (*argumentum*)<sup>43</sup> as categories of narration are encompassed by the latter and that what is really new is the fact that

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*Platonici* di Elio Aristide," *Rhetorica* 26 (2008), 113-137, Antonino Milazzo, *Un dialogo difficile: la retorica in conflitto nei Discorsi Platonic di Elio Aristide* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2002), Laurent Pernot, "Platon contre Platon: le problème de la rhétorique dans les *Discours Platoniciens* d'Aelius Aristide," in M. Dixsaut, ed., *Contre Platon, I: Le platonisme dévoilé* (Paris: Vrin, 1993), Jaap-Jan Flinterman, "'... largely fictitious ...': Aelius Aristides on Plato's dialogues." *Ancient Narrative* 1 (2000-2001), 32-54, Brian Reardon, *Courants littéraires grecs des II<sup>e</sup> e III<sup>e</sup> siècles après J.-C.* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971). The fact that the passages from Aristides' oration *In Defense of Oratory* (or. 2), in which the ideas on the civilizing force of rhetoric, as advocated by Isocrates in his *Antidosis* (253-257), are almost literally adopted by the former, makes us assume that Isocrates' influence upon Aristides was much greater than previously thought.

41. It is about conjecture, with no degree of certainty, as has been pointed out in George Norlin's study edition of the author, vol. 2, 496, n. a.

42. *Panathenaicus*, 246: ... proelōmenon dē se sunqēnai logon ... toj mēn ·vq̄ūmwj q̄nagignēs̄kousin īploān eīnai dōxanta ... toj d' q̄kribij̄ diexioās̄in aūtōn ... calepōn fainōmenon kā duskatamfq̄hton kā pollāj̄ mēn fstor...aj̄ ḡsmonta kā filosof...aj̄ ... kā yeudolog...aj̄, oū tāj̄ e,,q̄ismšn̄hj̄ met̄ kak...aj̄ blēptein toŷj̄ sumpoliteuomšn̄ouj̄, q̄ll̄ tāj̄ dunamšn̄hj̄ ... tšrpein toŷj̄ q̄koūontaj̄.— The English version of this and all other passages from Isocrates' discourses is borrowed from G. Norlin's study edition of the author (LCL).

43. In ancient theory of narration, the type of narrative also known as *drama*, or *dramatikon*, or *plasmaticon* (=argumentum), characterized by an account of imaginary exploits, which yet could have occurred (Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*, 263: pl̄sma dē pragmt̄wn m̄¼ genomšn̄wn mēn dmo...wj̄ dē toj̄ genomšn̄oj̄ legomšn̄wn), and appearing as the genre-designation of the ancient novel.

the term *philosophia* and all the three categories of narration<sup>44</sup> in classical rhetoric such as *mythos*, *historia* and *plasma*, are coordinated, in so far as *mythos* and *plasma*, between which every difference started, as it seems, to disappear already in Dio's time, are, as we have already seen, covered by the term *pseudologia*.

Now the question arises whether the term *philosophia* as coordinated with the mentioned categories of narration possesses some higher significance in the cited passage from Isocrates' *Panathenaicus*. The very fact that both Dio and Isocrates were, as we have already seen, the executors of Socrates' political testament, with the latter being, moreover, Socrates' or rather Plato's favourite orator, can provide an answer to the question.

Put simply, this means that, excepting the Homeric legacy, the fusing of categories of narration was regarded as a Socratic-Platonic heritage and that the creative use of the mentioned authors' stylistic features was a necessary prerequisite for putting the aforesaid procedure into practice, quite in keeping with Dio's key thesis in his fairly short essay on Homer and Socrates. What is being referred to here is a thesis that, as already seen, closely coincided with the attitudes taken by Isocrates in his palinode where we find yet another detail of major significance when it comes to evaluating not only the *Panathenaicus* but also the above-mentioned stylistic procedure said to be the only one capable of helping a man of letters achieve immortality.<sup>45</sup>

In the palinode, there is yet another detail of decisive importance for our understanding of Greek literature in so far as it points to the enigmatic play with illusion (appearances) and reality as well as to the fact that we cannot comprehend the essence of a literary, let alone 'sophistical,' work without having previously submitted to a sharp systematic analysis the fusion of categories of narration in it. What we are referring to is a method which has not been applied yet to our field of study, with the consequence that a great number of works of the mentioned literature still remain essentially unread and therefore poorly evaluated,<sup>46</sup> as was otherwise the case with Dio's *Olympic Discourse* the magical beauty of which has time and again, for the reasons stated, escaped researchers.

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44. Cf., among others, Cicero, *On the Invention*, 27 and Anonymus, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 1, 12 (*fabula est quae neque ueras neque ueri similes continet res ... historia est gesta res sed ab aetatis nostrae memoria remota ... argumentum est ficta res, quae tamen fieri potuit*).

45. *Panathenaicus*, 260: doke:j g&#x27;r moi z&#x2264;n m&#x2264;n l>yesqai d&#x2212;xan ... par| ple...osi d&#x2264; ka` m&#x2212;llon &#x2212;mologoum&#x2264;nhn t&#x2212;j n&#x2264;n &#x2212;parco&#x2212;shj, teleut>saj d&#x2264; t&#x2212;n b...on meq&#x2264;xein &#x2264;qanas...aj, o&#x2212;t&#x2212;j to:j qeo:j paro&#x2212;shj, &#x2264;ll! t&#x2212;j to:j &#x2212;mpigignom&#x2264;noj per^ t&#x2264;n dienegk&#x2212;ontwn &#x2212;mp... tini t&#x2264;n kal&#x2264;n &#x2264;rgwn mn>>mhn &#x2212;mpoio&#x2212;shj, which can be regarded as an echo of Socrates' key thesis in the *Phaedrus* (273d) that a true rhetorician ought not to undergo much diligent toil for the sake of speaking and acting before men, "but that he may be able to speak and to do everything, so far as possible, in a manner pleasing to the gods."

46. This is, inter alia, the case with G. Norlin's attitudes to the *Panathenaicus*, as expressed in his introduction to the discourse (LCL), where he asserts that Isocrates does not "show a firm grasp in the handling of the subject," and that "the *Panathenaicus* gives evidence of the handicaps under which it was elaborated." One of the best examples of the

Finally it turned out that Dio's 55<sup>th</sup> discourse, or rather his short essay on Homer and Socrates contains in a small format the author's poetics best exemplified, as we will see shortly, by his *Olympic Discourse* in which we encounter, apart from the elaboration of Homeric and Socratic concepts, the fusion of history, myth, fiction (*plasma*) and, fable, quite in keeping with the key message of Isocrates' *Panathenaicus*, namely concepts we must fully grasp so as to be able to enjoy the beauties of Dio's style, something for which both finding allusions and unravelling symbols and enigmas was a necessary prerequisite. Thus the order of presentation suggests itself in so far as we need first to turn our attention to the structural elements of the discourse before we examine closely Dio's self-interpretation which in itself is to be regarded as the biggest gain.

### **Allusions, Symbols, Enigmas, Structure and Composition of Dio's *Olympic Discourse*-The First Part: the Fable**

To what extent elements of the author's self-interpretation in Isocrates' *Panathenaicus* assumed characteristics of a stroke of luck, can be inferred from the fact that the aforesaid categories of narration (*historia*, *mythos*, *plasma*, *fabula*) constitute the structural elements of Dio's *Olympic Discourse*, which means that any failure to notice their position in the overall structure as well as their interplay and interweaving inevitably leads to both erroneous interpretation of the discourse and its inadequate aesthetic evaluation. Therefore we intend first to present the order of the constituent parts of the whole with the purpose of gaining an initial idea of both the author's impressive sense of composition and his rejection of the rules of the art of rhetoric upon which the old sophistic too heavily relied. Since we are speaking of Dio's impressive sense of composition, for now suffice it to say that the fact that both the beginning and the end of his *Olympic Discourse* are marked by meaning- and symbol-laden admonitions standing in sharp contrast to the serene and solemn atmosphere of the festival clearly speaks of the above-mentioned sense of composition.

In an unusual manner, Dio starts his discourse with a fable, proceeds with a myth, and, after having played with historical fact such as Phidias' rendering account of the monies spent on the statue, concludes it with *plasma* by using Socrates' or rather Plato's favourite stylistic device applied, among other dialogues, in the *Euthydemus*, such as putting his own view on art in Phidias' mouth so as to let the greatest sculptor point to the difficulty of the challenge he was facing while chiselling out the famous statue of Zeus on an example of relationship between sculpture and literature. As it will turn out, the mentioned

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enigmatic play with illusion and reality is the Greek novel the plot of which appears at first sight to be ingenuous, easy, and, in a certain sense, banal, but an attempt at penetrating the structure of its narrative might produce unexpected results.

relationship is nothing other than a metaphor for the challenges both Dio and every other author of the post-classical age of Greek literature was confronted with in his relationship towards the greatest and unrivalled literary heritage which, as we shall see later, forced him to use in dealing with it the most difficult and yet only possible method capable of guaranteeing, quite in keeping with Isocrates' attitude in the *Panathenaicus*, not only creativity but also immortality, i.e. one used by Phidias in chiselling out his sculptures. Thus Dio's discourse is divided into three almost equal parts, the first being essentially characterized by fable (§§ 1-26), the second by myth (§§ 27-48) and the third by *plasma* (§§ 50-85).

At the very beginning of the fable Dio maintains that he has "met with the strange and inexplicable experience of the owl"<sup>47</sup> since he is surrounded with a large crowd of festival visitors in the same way as the owl is with the birds when they all "flock to her whenever she utters her mournful and far from pleasing note"<sup>48</sup> by which they are for some strange reason much more affected and attracted than by the charming song of the nightingale,<sup>49</sup> or by all the fine display of the peacock feathers,<sup>50</sup> or by the joyous and triumphant notes of the last song the swan utters when "it has forgotten the troubles of life and conducts itself to the sorrowless death."<sup>51</sup>

All of this suggests that what we are dealing with here is an allusion to Aesop's fable, but we do not know yet what it is that essentially connects Dio with the owl. One of the subsequent passages in which Dio gives a brief summary of Aesop's fable (§§ 7-8), the essence of which is captured by his assertion that the owl was "advising the birds, when the first oak tree began to grow, not to let it happen,"<sup>52</sup> because it "produces a drug from which none of them might escape," and to pick up seeds of flax,<sup>53</sup> because nets for catching them would be made from it, can help us to come closer to the solution of the enigma. When finally, upon seeing a man armed with a bow, the owl prophesied to the birds saying that he, though on foot himself, "will outstrip them with the help of their own

47. *Olympic Discourse*, 1 ... <sup>TM</sup>gë ka^ par' Øm^n ka^ par' ~šroiĵ ple...osi pšponqa tÕ táĵ glaukÕĵ ŷtopon ka^ parfdoxon pŷqoj.

48. Ibid.: <sup>TM</sup>ke...nhn ġr oÛdèn sofwšran aÛtîn oâsan oÛdè belt...w tÕ eidoĵ ... Ótan d»pote fqšgxhtai luphrÕn ka^ oÛdamĵ 'dÚ, perišpousi t' ŷlla Órnea.

49. Ibid. 3: ... t' Órnea ... oÛte táĵ çhdÕnoj çkoÚonta táĵ fwnÁĵ »wqen <sup>TM</sup>porqreuomšnhĵ oÛdèn (sc. boÚletai) pŷscein prÕĵ aÛt»n.

50. Ibid. 2: pĵĵ dè oÛ tÕn tai m©llon Đrĵnta qaumazei (sc. t' ŷlla Órnea), kalÕn oÛtw ka^ poik...lon ...

51. Ibid. 4: ... çll' oÛdè tÕn kÚknon çspŷzetai (sc. t' ŷlla Órnea) di' tš¼n mousik»n, oÛdè Ótan Ømnĵ tš¼n Østŷthn òdš¼n ... propšmpwn çlÚpwĵ aØtÕn ... prÕĵ ŷlupon tÕn qŷnaton.

52. Ibid. 7: Óqen ka^ tÕn màqon Ašswpoj xunšsthsen Óti soš¼ oâsa xuneboÚleue toĵ ŃrmoĵjtÁĵ druÕĵ <sup>TM</sup>n çrcĵ fuomšnhĵ mš¼ <sup>TM</sup>©sai, çll' çnele«n pŷnta trÕpon.

53. Ibid: pŷlin dè tÕ l...non tĵn çnqrèpwn speirŷntwn, <sup>TM</sup>kšleue ka^ toàto <sup>TM</sup>klšgein tÕ spšrma: mš¼ ġr <sup>TM</sup>p' çgaqù fu»sesqai.

feathers,"<sup>54</sup> and send shafts after them, they looked at her with incredulity and "considered her foolish and mad"<sup>55</sup> until they were convinced of the veracity of her words, and began to "consider her in very truth as exceedingly wise,"<sup>56</sup> as a result of which they flock to her, whenever she shows herself, as to one possessing all knowledge, but "she no longer gives them advice, but merely laments."<sup>57</sup>

The content of the fable seems to allow the conclusion that the ability of divination is what essentially connects Dio with the owl, but the problem is that the essence is somewhat more complicated than it might at first sight appear, as can be inferred from a few introductory remarks Dio addressed to his audience on "true word and salutary council, which Philosophy gave to the Greeks of old,"<sup>58</sup> as the main reason why they are, apparently from sheer curiosity, drawing near to him, his bodily infirmity and philosopher's attire excepted.<sup>59</sup> What Dio was thinking of when he used a personified notion of Philosophy can be inferred from his assertion that he himself knows nothing and makes no claim to knowledge, and that he has not hitherto said anything worthy of consideration,<sup>60</sup> as a result of which his advice and warning failed to make effect on his listeners so that for precisely this reason he fully resembles the owl.<sup>61</sup> It is abundantly clear that what we are dealing with here are Socrates' overemphasized ironical assertions about his widespread lack of any substantial knowledge whatsoever.

Thus, though in an enigmatic way, Dio let it be known that he, spellbound as he was by both Socrates' living word and his divinatory abilities, walks after him and follows in his footsteps, looking upon him as a divinity quite in keeping with his famous *parainesis* in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>62</sup> Thus, in full awareness of his mission, he simply contented himself with the role of an interpreter of both Socrates' living word and the central principles of his political testament in the *Alcibiades* he was striving to put into practice after a lapse of almost four centuries since such an

54. Ibid. 8: „doàsa toxout»n tina ¥ndra prošlegen Óti OØtoj Ð çn¾r fqfseiØm©j toj Ømetšreoj ptero.j.

55. Ibid.: t! dè (sc. Órnea) °p...stei toj lÓgoij ka^ çnØhton aÚt¾n 'goànto ka^ ma...nesqai oefaskon.

56. Ibid.: Ústeron dè peirèmena (sc.t! Órnea) ™qáÚmaze ka^ tù Ónti sofwtfthn ™nØmizen.

57. Ibid.: ka^ di| toàto, ™p|n fanÍ, prÒseisin æj prÕj çpanta ™pistamšnhn: ' dè sumbouleÚei mèn aÚto.j oÙdèn æti, ÑdÚretai dè mØnon.

58. Ibid., 9: ‡swj oàn pareil»fate Øme.j lÓgon tin! çlhqÁ ka^ xumboul¾n sumfšrousan, ¼antina xuneboÚleuse Filofof...a to.j prÒteron "Ellhsin, çn of tÓte mèn °gnØhsan ka^ °t...mhsan, of dè nàn Øpomim»skontai ka... moi pros...asi di| tÕ scÁma, Filofof...an timíntej éšper t¾n glaàka ¥fwnon ka^ çparrhs...aston oàsan.

59. See previous note.

60. Ibid., 9-10: ™gè mèn g|r oÙdèn aØtù xÚnoida oÚte prÒteron e,pÒnti spoudÁj ¥xion oÚte nàn ™pistamšnJ plšon Ømín. Cf. 5: Øme.j dè ™mo^ prÒsite ka^ boÚlesqe çkoÚein tÕ mhdèn e,,dÓtoj mhdè ffškontoj e,,dšnai, ¥r' oÚk Ñrqij çpeikÉzw t¾n spoud¾n Ømín tù per^ t¾n glaàka gignomšnJ scedŎn oÚk ¥neu daimon...aj tinÓj boul»sewj. Cf. Plato, *Apology*, 20c, 23b.

61. Cf. n. 58: ... timíntej éšper t¾n glaàka ¥fwnon ka^ çparrhs...aston oàsan.

62. 266b–c: ™fn te tin' ¥llon 'g»swmai dunatŎn e,,j ên ka^ ™p^ poll| pefukŎq' Ðr©n, toàton dièkw katŎpiske met' ‡cnion éšte qeo◊o.

attempt left a gap in continuity—just at the moment when the new sophistic was being born as a phenomenon that was, as it turns out,<sup>63</sup> closely connected not as much with the sophistic legacy as with that of Socrates and Plato. We shall now have a closer look at both Dio's poetics and its strategic aspect, as evidenced by the author's self-interpretation otherwise presented enigmatically.

In the first part of his discourse, Dio further develops the main theme of Aesop's fable using a technique that can best be characterized as theme and variations. Thus his opening remark on how he has met with the strange and inexplicable experience of the owl (§1), by whose mournful and far from pleasing tone all the birds are, contrary to all expectations, attracted, is followed by the favourite topos in the schools of rhetoric, such as a comparison of the sound and visual effects and the implications this has for literary creation. What is being referred to here is a comparison based on a highly unusual contest between nightingale, swan and peacock (§§ 2-4), in which the visual (peacock) regularly, as is otherwise the case in Lucian,<sup>64</sup> carries off the overwhelming victory over the acoustic, or rather tonal<sup>65</sup> (nightingale) and, by the same token, the rhetorical, as opposed to what we encounter in Dio, in whose discourse the owl's mournful and far from pleasing note, as we have already seen, overshadows all the other sound and visual effects, which in itself ideally fits in with the final message of the *Olympic Discourse*, as we will see shortly. Dio mitigates somewhat the impact of this gloomy picture by making allusion to Homer's emblematic image<sup>66</sup> of great beauty such as the alighting of many tribes of winged fowl upon the Asian meadow about Caystrius streams,<sup>67</sup> which in itself shows exemplarily the author's technique in variations on a theme.

Dio's delicate technique becomes more apparent shortly afterwards when he puts the sophist in the broader context of a contest among birds, in so far as the latter reminds him of the peacock,<sup>68</sup> whereby he set the scene for what follows, namely an irony-clad invective against the new sophistic (§§ 10-11). But he comes back again to the main topic of Aesop's fable (§§ 7-8) so as to make it possible for him to point to the importance of divination for the individual, the philosopher and the whole of society, as advocated by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*,<sup>69</sup>

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63. It should also be noted that every theory that supports the assumption that the Second Sophistic is primarily characterised by rhetoric can rightly be regarded as yet another instance of adopting von Arnim's theses.

64. Hall, 19.

65. Ibid.: ...oÚtwj ¥macÒn ti œoiken eĩnai <sup>1</sup> di' Ôyewj <sup>1</sup>don».

66. *Olympic Discourse*, 4: oÚkoun oÙdè tÒte ¢qro...zetai khloÚmena toj mšlesi prŒj Ôcqhn potamoà tinoj Á kaqar'n ÆÒna l...mnhj ½ tina smikr'n eÚqalÁ potam...an nhs...da.

67. *Iliad*, 2, 459-462.

68. Cf. n. 11.

69. 4, 7, 10, where Socrates is represented as openly advocating the need for attributing great importance to the mantic and divination in every well-ordered society.

as well as to lay stress on Phidias' representation of both himself and Pericles<sup>70</sup> along with the owl on the outer side of the shield of Athena Parthenos or, to be more precise, in the battle of the Amazons as prefiguring not only his close association with the owl, but also the true nature of his poetics (Phidias) and state-building mission of his literary work (Pericles). Dio then ironically recommends that his audience (§§ 10-11) cleave in place of him to the sophists and their omniscience,<sup>71</sup> and follow them wherever they lead—whether in Babylon, or in Bactra, or Sousa, or Palibothra, or in some other famous and wealthy city—neglecting both parents and the land of their birth, the shrines of the gods and the tombs of their forefathers<sup>72</sup> so as to be in a position to gain virtue, preeminence and wealth. If for some reasons such as poverty or age or lack of physical strength they are unable to follow them, then they should persuade or, if necessary, compel by any and all means their own children to do so with a view to getting them properly educated and renowned among all Greeks and barbarians, and, moreover pre-eminent in almost every kind of power.<sup>73</sup>

It is in the next passage that we encounter one of Dio's key attitudes towards both sophistic and rhetoric. Ironically, Dio says that he would first of all exhort himself to follow the sophists in their wanderings, if only the state of his health and his advanced age permitted,<sup>74</sup> and that being so, he is forced to search for a small grain of wisdom<sup>75</sup> cast aside, as it were, from the ancients and grown stale for lack of teachers<sup>76</sup> who are both still living and capable of pointing out its healing power. On the basis of the above as well as on account of the fact that Dio looks upon himself as an interpreter of Socrates' teachings, the mentioned grain of wisdom, cast aside from the ancients and grown stale, can be nothing other than Socrates' legacy bequeathed in his political testament in the *Alcibiades*, and Dio had every reason to pride himself of being its first executor after a break in continuity dating back to Isocrates' times, as confirmed, among other things, by

Cf. also Eunapius' account (470-472) of Sosipatra and her youngest son Antoninus whose way of living is essentially characterized by Socrates' ideal referred to above.

70. *Olympic Discourse*, 6. Cf. Plutarch, *Pericles*, 31, 4-5.

71. *Ibid.*, 10.

72. *Ibid.*: oEj tMn Omelj Tmqšhte xune<nai ... eÜdaimonšteroi cesesqe aUtÁj tÁj eÜdaimon...aj.

73. *Ibid.*, 11: e,, dè aUto m¼ boÚlesqe, katamemfÖmenoi t¼n aOtín... çsqšneian, çll| toçj ge ufšsi m¼ fqonoantej... ~koàs... te Tmpitršpontej ka^ ¥kontaj pe...qontej ... æj ~n paideuqšntej fkanij ka^ genÖmenoi sofo^ par| p©sin "Ellhsi ka^ barb£roij Nnomasto... ðsi ...

74. *Ibid.*, 12.

75. *Ibid.*: ...çll| gr çnfçgkh di! tÖ kakopaqe<n, e‡ poÚ ti dunhsÖmeqa, eØršsqai par| tîn palaiîn çndrîn èsper çperrimmšnon ½dh ka^ >wlon sof...aj le...yanon.

76. *Ibid.*: ... c>tei tîn kreittÖnwn te ka^ zèntwn didask£lwn. Cf. Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, 496 where it is alleged that the entire education of Libanius was characterized by an almost complete absence of a teacher, which can be explained by his searching for a small grain of wisdom due to which, as it seems, he showed no interest in having a professor.



Philostratus' enigmatic catalogue of philosophers who, on account of the fact that they expounded their theories with the surpassing eloquence of a rhetorician, were regarded as sophists, a catalogue in which Dio was placed, apart from Favorinus, as the only orator.<sup>77</sup>

In the same passage, Dio characterizes himself as *planomenos en tois logois*,<sup>78</sup> i.e. as a writer whose style is, in keeping with his life of roving,<sup>79</sup> decisively based on a free association of ideas and thoughts—in sharp contrast, one would say, to the impressive system of sophistical and rhetorical *techne*. This can be seen in Dio's autobiographical references (§§ 16-20) to both his participation in the war waged between Romans and Dacians<sup>80</sup> as a curious onlooker and peaceful observer of the conflict and his recalling to mind an old vow<sup>81</sup> having as a result his decision to turn the course, exit the theater of war on the Danube, and set out for the temple of Zeus and the festival in Olympia, based on the conviction that things divine have the greater claim and are more profitable than things human,<sup>82</sup> however important they may be. This can be explained by his turning away from all things Roman (the mundane) and embracing all things Greek (the spiritual), and be considered as criticism of all that Rome represents, evident, among other things, from the fact that he has not, as he claims, arrived at the Danube to be a mere observer of the armed conflict but to fulfill his desire to see strong men contending for their freedom and their dear native land.<sup>83</sup> That, in the concrete

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77. The fact that the mentioned catalogue (*Lives of the Sophists*, 484-492) is made up of the names of the philosophers who were more or less associated with Plato's Academy (Eudoxus of Cnidus, Leo of Byzantium, Drias of Ephesus, Carneades of Athens, Philostratus the Egyptian, Theomnestus of Naucrates, Dio of Prusa, Favorinus of Arelate) and, by the same token, Socrates' legacy, points to the conclusion that Dio was also regarded by others as an executor of Socrates' political testament, which was hard to notice due to Philostratus' tendency to disguise the essence of things by changing the places of Dio and Favorinus in the said register to make it appear as if the latter's legacy were far more important than Dio's.

78. *Olympic Discourse*, 16: οὐ μᾶντοι ἰὸ γυνεὶ κκοῦσεσθε δπο...ων ἄλλου τινὸς τίναν... cr<sup>3/4</sup> δὲ τῶν ὀμῶν ἐμβραcu, ὅ τι ἴν τῶν...V moi, τοῦτῆς ὑπεσσαι, καὶ μᾶν ἐγανακτεῖν τῶν φα...νωμαι planèmenoj τῶν τοῦ ἰὸγοῖν... This explicit reference by Dio to his favourite method went unnoticed in the annotated editions where the author's discourses are seen through the prism of the traditional rhetoric and its modes (*prolalia*, *exordium*, *narratio*, *argumentatio* and *peroratio*), as is otherwise the case in H.-J. Klauck, *Dion von Prusa*.

79. Ibid.: ... ἐσπερ ἐμᾶλει καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐκτὸν ἐζηκα ἐλῆμενοῖν ...

80. Ibid., 19: ... e,rhnikōj polšmou qeat»j, tō mèn sīma τῶνδε»j, τῶν δὲ ἴλικ...an pro»kwn.

81. Ibid., 20: ... eÜcÁj mnhsqe`j palai»j deáro çpetrēphn prōj ὀμῶν ...

82. Ibid.: ἐεὶ τῆς κρε...ttw καὶ prourgia...tera nom...zwn τῆς ἐνqrwp...nwn, ἴ...ka ἴν ἴ. Judging from the way of putting it, this idea is a direct reflection of Plato's concept of world theater in the *Laws* (803c), based on the idea that the object really worthy of all serious and blessed effort is God, while man is contrived to be a plaything of God, which is regarded as just the best part of him.

83. Cf. *Olympic Discourse*, 20: ... τῶν πικμῶν „de»n ἄνδραῖς ἐγwnizomšnouv ὀπὲρ ἐrcÁj καὶ dunfmewj, τοῦτῆς δὲ ὀπὲρ τῶν λευκῶν...aj te καὶ patr...doj.

case, we are dealing with a hidden criticism of Rome speaks in its own way the incidental detail emerging from Dio's identification with the owl, which enabled him to transfer his own state of mind to the latter by characterizing her as *aparrhesiastos*, i.e. as a creature that *cannot speak her mind* or, to be more precise, *must not express her opinions frankly and plainly*,<sup>84</sup> which in turn may explain not only the mentioned hidden criticism of Rome but also Dio's choice of fable as the framework of the first part of his discourse.

After thorough analysis of the first part of the discourse, it turned out that Dio carefully selected the place and time of delivering his discourse so as to make it possible for both his messages and his literary-political project to gain in importance and symbolism. Truth be told, one can hardly imagine a more ideal setting than that offered by the shrine of Zeus at Olympia for pointing out one's strong attachment to the key theses of Socrates' political testament and above all its ethical components which, quite in keeping with the famous *parainesis* in the *Phaedrus*,<sup>85</sup> required that one follow in the great philosopher's footsteps in a kind of religious fervour. It can safely be said that after so long a lapse of time a new executor of the testament appears who, unlike his predecessor, Isocrates, lays stress on its ethical components and, by the same token, brings a new dimension to the phenomenon of the Second Sophistic.

The very fact that Dio delivered his discourse before a large audience, and in sight of the famous statue of Zeus at Olympia is laden with meaning to a much greater degree than it might seem at first sight if we take into account that Polemo was assigned almost the same role more than thirty years later<sup>86</sup> when, at the invitation of Hadrian, he made an oration in sight of the temple of Olympian Zeus at Athens, which was, after an interval of more than five hundred years,<sup>87</sup> at last completed in A.D. 130 when the mentioned emperor consecrated it as a marvelous triumph of time. If we also take into account the fact that Dio made his oration at Olympia more than five hundred years after the chiselling out of the statue of Olympian Zeus had been completed by Phidias parallelisms and their symbolism become increasingly apparent. It is these parallelisms that can help us detect two major movements within the Second Sophistic, one of which drew its inspiration from Socrates' political testament unlike the other represented, among others, by Polemo and best described as an imperial sophistic,<sup>88</sup> of which, as was otherwise the case with Polemo's work, there is nothing remaining most likely

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84. Cf. n. 58.

85. Cf. n. 62.

86. 97 AD.

87. Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, 533.

88. Almost since the inception of the research work, most notably since the time of von Arnim, a prevalent view was that the Second Sophistic had always been the same phenomenon, which can be regarded as a direct consequence of lack of depth analysis of Dio's oeuvre.

due to the failure of its exponents to base themselves upon the ethical components of Socrates' political testament.

### The Second Part of the Discourse: the Myth

Unlike the first part of the discourse essentially based on Aesop's fable which Dio chose as the most appropriate way to point, albeit enigmatically, to both the key elements of his poetics and the strategic dimension of his literary activity, the second is essentially founded on myth, which can be, as we will see shortly, explained, apart from the influence of Socrates' discourses in the *Phaedrus*, by his intention to paint with enchanting colours the life of the most earliest and ancient men, so as to be in a position to sing a heartfelt hymn of praise to their innate conception of the nature of the gods and, by the same token, to lay stress on poetic features of his own rhetoric. The theme itself such as the man's innate conception of the nature of the gods could be further developed in an exemplary manner only by bringing poetic elements into the oration, something for which Dio uses a particularly characteristic term, *hymnesai*.<sup>89</sup>

To achieve his aim of singing a hymn of praise to the innate conception which the most earliest and ancient men had of the nature of the gods, Dio, in keeping with the basic elements of his poetics, applied the method of blending together Homeric images, analogies borrowed from Plato's *Euthydemus*, as well as contemporary version of the myth of Prometheus which was otherwise used, as we will see shortly, by Lucian in his fairly brief writing, *Prometheus es in verbis*, as a basis for his own poetics. As far as the mentioned images are concerned, both are borrowed from the fifth book of the *Iliad*, also known as *Diomedea*, due to Diomedes' heroic feats glorified in it, and it is hardly a coincidence that Dio selected just this book and these images in so far as they served as a vehicle for conveying his final message, as will be seen later. In one of them the dying Sarpedon is represented as lying beneath a beautiful oak of Zeus, the iconic landmark in the Trojan war theater, in the immediate vicinity of the gates of Ilion, with the North Wind blowing on him and making him live again after he had painfully breathed out his spirit.<sup>90</sup> In the other, the goddess Hera is represented as staying her horses where the Simois and the Scamander join their streams, and loosing them from the chariot, and shedding thick mist over them so as to give the possibility for Simois to make ambrosia to spring up for them to graze on.<sup>91</sup>

89. *Olympic Discourse*, 22: ...t>n te fÚsin aÙtoà ka^ t¼n dÚnamhn ØmnÁsai lÒgJ brace< ...

90. 5, 690-98: ... TMk d' Ÿra of mhroà dØru me...linon ðse qÚraze / ‡fqimój Pel£gwn ... / tÕn dè l...pe yuc», kat' d' Ñfqalmîn kšcut' éclÚj. / aâtij d' çmpnÚsqh, per^ dè pnoi¼ Boršao / zègrei TMpipne...ousa kakij kekafhÒta qumÒn.

91. *Iliad*, 5, 773-777:éll' Óte ... ïxon potamè te ·eonte /.../ çenq' †ppouj æsthse... "Hrh / IÚsas' TMx Ñčšwn, per^ d' °šra poul¼n œceue / to<sin d' çmbros...hn SimØej çnšteile nšmesqai.

As for the analogy drawn in the *Euthydemus* between the initiation ceremony of the Corybantes and the deceptive nature of sophistic method,<sup>92</sup> Dio deprives it of its ironical meaning, and, in a kind of a montage of images, blends it with the mentioned Homeric images into a unified whole, so as to be in a position to sing a heartfelt hymn to the gigantic dimensions of the initiation<sup>93</sup> unfolding, unlike the one practiced in both the Eleusinian and Corybantic mysteries, not in a little yet beautiful building, but in the whole universe,<sup>94</sup> with the rites performed, not by human beings who are of no higher order than the initiates themselves, but by immortal gods who are, in sheer contrast to human mysteries, initiating mortal men, among other things, by dancing around them forever.<sup>95</sup>

Thus by fusing the mentioned Homeric images and Plato's analogies, Dio wanted to convey the idea of the closeness of the most earliest and ancient men to both the gods and the elements of their Creation, as evident, in his view, from the fact that "as a first nourishment they had the earthly food at that time being soft and rich, namely the moist loam, which they licked up from the earth, their mother, even as plants now draw the moisture therefrom,"<sup>96</sup> with the succeeding generations expanding this narrow choice to tender herbs, sweet dew<sup>97</sup> and moist air which they sucked in as infants suck in their food,<sup>98</sup> as a result of which the teat of the nature never failed them and was ever at their lips.<sup>99</sup> This narrow choice was also extended to wild fruits<sup>100</sup> and "fresh nymph-haunted rills,"<sup>101</sup>—a clear allusion, as far as the latter is concerned, to the famous passage from the *Ion*.<sup>102</sup> Even the act of giving birth testifies to the closeness of the most earliest men

92. 277d.

93. *Olympic Discourse*, 33: ... kaqɛper e,èqasin <sup>TM</sup>n tù kaloumšnJ qronismù kaq...santej toÝj muoumšnnoj of teloàntej kÚklJp ericoreÚein ...

94. *Ibid.*, 34: ... xÚmpan tÕ tín çnqrèpwn gšnoj t<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>n ÐlÒklhron ka^ ... tele...an telet<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>n muoÚmenon, oÚk <sup>TM</sup>n o,,k»mati mikrù ... çll<sup>!</sup> <sup>TM</sup>n tùde tù kÒsmJ, poik...IJ ka^ sofù dhmiourg»mati ...

95. *Ibid.*: ... qeîn çqanɛtwn qnhtoÝj teloÚntwn, nukt^ te ka^ 'mšrv ka^ fwt^ ka^ Ýstroij ... çtecnij pericoreuÓntwn çe... ...

96. *Ibid.*, 29-30: ... prèthn mèn of prîtoi ka^ aÚtÒcqonej t<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>n geèdh (sc. trof<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>n œcontej), malakÁj œti ka^ p...onoj tÁj „lÚoj tÒte oÚshj, éesper çpÕ mhtrÕj tÁj gÁj licmwmšnnoi, kaqɛper t<sup>!</sup> fut<sup>!</sup> nàn ›lkousi t<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>n <sup>TM</sup>x aÚtÁj „kmɛda ...

97. *Ibid.*, 30: ... deusřran dè (sc. trof<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>n œcontej) of ½dh proiÓntej karpîn te aÚtomɛtwn ka^ pÒaj oÚ sklhrçj, rma drÒsJ gluke...v ka^ nɛmasi numfin pot...moij.

98. *Ibid.*: ka^ d<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ka^ toà perišcontoj ʳrthmšnnoi ka^ trefÒmenoi tí dihneke toà pneÚmatoj <sup>TM</sup>pirroÍ, çšraçgrÕn ›lkontej, éste n»pioi paçdej ...

99. *Ibid.*, 30-31: ... oÚpote <sup>TM</sup>pile...pontoj gɛlaktoj çe... sfisi qhlÁj <sup>TM</sup>gkeimšnjh.

100. Cf. n. 96.

101. Cf. n. 97.

102. 534a-b: ... of poihta^ ... çpÕ krhnîn melirrÚtwn <sup>TM</sup>k Mousîn k»pwn tinîn ka^ napîn drepÒmenoi t<sup>!</sup> mšlh 'm«n řsrousin éesper af mšlittai ... The only difference between Platonic model and its elaboration in Dio is of formal nature in so far as fresh rills are closely associated with the Muses in Plato, as distinguished from Dio where they are closely related to the nymphs.

to the gods in so far as the babe when cast forth from the womb was received by the earth, its real mother, with the air, after breathing into it and quickening it, at once awakening it with the nourishment more liquid than milk and enabling it to make a cry.<sup>103</sup>

What was especially hard to perceive in the whole set of concepts was Dio's dependence on the contemporary version of the myth of Prometheus, which we, as already said, first encounter in the mentioned fairly brief writing by Lucian, as evident from the fact that in Lucian Prometheus' modelling human figures in clay, which Athena makes live by breathing into the mud,<sup>104</sup> symbolizes the invention, or rather originality (*to kainourgon, kainopoiein*), and as such stands in sharp contrast to his favourite method, *montage*, otherwise referred to as *archaioteron ti tou plasmatos*,<sup>105</sup> on account of the fact that the latter, unlike the former, guarantees that his literary creations will endure for all time instead of being temporarily limited like Promethean creation. Thus in Dio, instead of modelling the clay,<sup>106</sup> we encounter licking it up as just one of the ways man's closeness to and his innate conception of the gods manifests itself. This is also the main topic of the myth of the winged chariot in the *Phaedrus*<sup>107</sup> in which something basically the same as *montage*, namely a method of the analytical partitioning of the phenomenon (*diairesis*) and the synoptic reduction of the partitioned to only idea (*synagoge*),<sup>108</sup> is strongly advocated, which also found its reflection in Dio's *Olympic Discourse*, as we will see shortly.

The myth of the most earliest men's innate conception of the nature of the gods, ending in Dio's strong disapproval of Epicurus' doctrine, in which a daemon of Pleasure drove the gods out of their own state and kingdom and took their place,<sup>109</sup> is followed by a theoretical framework of not only the second part of the discourse but also of the whole of it (§§ 39-50), which consists of a short overview of the remaining four conceptions of the nature of the gods, characterized as acquired and made manifest in poetry (§§ 39-43), legislature (§§ 39-43), fine and plastic arts (§§ 44-46) and philosophy (§ 47), and which due to its being reminiscent of digression stands out in sharp relief from the poetic features, as

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103. *Olympic Discourse*, 31: <sup>TM</sup>peid|n gfr <sup>TM</sup>kpsV tAj gastrOj nwrOn ceti ka^ e^dranej tO bršfoj, dšcetai mèn <sup>1</sup> gÁ, <sup>1</sup> tù Onti m»thr, Đ de e<sup>3</sup>/r e,,spneÚsaj te kai e,,syucèsaj eÙqYj ½geiren Øgrotšrv trof» gflaktoj ka^ fqšgxasqai paršscen. What we are dealing with here is the combining of both images borrowed from the fifth book of the *Iliad* into one.

104. *Prometheus es in verbis*, 3: ka...toi, fa...h tij "n ... oÙ taàta eþkass se tù Promhqeç, e||| tO kainourgOn toàto <sup>TM</sup>painin ka^ m<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> prOj ti ¥llo eçrcštupon memimhmšnon ...

105. *Ibid.*: <sup>TM</sup>mo^ de oÙ pEnu fkanOn, e,, kainopoieçn doko...hn, mhdè œcoi tij lšgein eçrcaiOterOn ti toà plšsmatoj, oá toàto eçpOgonOn <sup>TM</sup>stin.

106. It should be noted that Lucian implicitly characterizes his own method as modelling which, unlike that of Prometheus, is based on the archetype, as is otherwise the case in Dio.

107. 244a-257b.

108. 266b.

109. *Olympic Discourse*, 36.

exhibited by the author in the first section of the second part of his discourse. This is the term (*kath' auton ekbas*)<sup>110</sup> used by Dio to designate his method that allows itself a great deal of licence,<sup>111</sup> which implies a lot of minor storylines that will be incorporated into the major one<sup>112</sup> so as to make it possible for the audience to be acquainted with whatever suggests itself as profitable and indispensable<sup>113</sup> to the speaker's mind, which in itself is not easy for a philosopher to achieve, and as such stands in sharp contrast to the orations prepared to suit the water-clock and the constraint of court procedure,<sup>114</sup> i.e. in accordance with the rules of the art of rhetoric. Thus Dio made abundantly clear his distance from the rhetoric and sophistic of his own time, which has remained unnoticed in previous research on the subject, with the fatal consequences in terms of both identifying the new sophistic with the old and closely connecting the former with rhetoric ever since von Arnim's times.

This second section of the second part of the discourse, which can be rightly characterized as a digression about acquired conceptions of the nature of the gods due to its subject matter that sounds almost as dry as dust, seems at first sight to be a weak point in the composition of Dio's discourse. But when examined more closely, this section will turn out to be a strong link between the two first parts of the discourse basically characterized by fable and myth and the third essentially determined by *plasma* in so far as the latter deals almost exclusively with the conception of the nature of the gods as expressed in fine and plastic arts, as a result of which it can be seen as a kind of prelude to Dio's lengthy exposition on Phidias' poetics which will prove to be Dio's own poetics represented in a highly symbolic manner and based on an analogy between the visual and the acoustic, or rather between image and sound, an analogy which enjoyed great popularity in the period of the Second Sophistic, as can be inferred from the cited examples, and was, moreover, closely connected with both Socrates' method and his political testament, as we will see shortly.

### **The Third Part of the Discourse: *Plasma* or what is a Classic in Greek Literature?**

The words Dio puts in Phidias' mouth are an impressive testimony for the attitudes taken by an author of the post-classical period towards the great art of

110. Ibid., 38: taàta mèn oân <sup>TM</sup>pexÁlqen Ð lÒgoj kaq' aØtÕn <sup>TM</sup>kbfj.

111. Ibid.: tucÕn gr oÛ ·@dion tÕn toà filofou noàn ka^ lÒgon <sup>TM</sup>pisce«n ... oÛ melethqšnta prÕj Ûdwr ka^ dikanik³«n çnfgkhn ... çll| met| pollÁj <sup>TM</sup>xous...aj ka^ çde...aj.

112. Ibid., 43: çll| gr e.,kÕjt oÝj pepaideumšnouj ... sunexanÛein ka^ sunekpone«n, mšcrij "n æj <sup>TM</sup>k kampÁj tinoj ka^ duscwr...aj katast»swmen e.,j eÛqe«an toÝj lÒgouj.

113. Ibid., 38: (sc. oÛ ·@dion tÕn toà filofou noàn ka^ lÒgon <sup>TM</sup>pisce«n) çnqa "n Ðrm»SV, toà xunantíntoj çe^ fainomšnou xumfšrontoj ka^ çnagka...ou toj çkrowmšnoj ...

114. Cf. n. 111.

the classical age. For the purpose of graphically illustrating the great difficulty of the challenge faced by the mentioned author, we will borrow vivid analogies T. S. Eliot<sup>115</sup> used to explain the long, uninterrupted period of decadence in Roman literature and, above all, Roman poetry after the birth of Virgil's classical work. In order to both demonstrate the mentioned decadence by means of images and give an answer to the question as to whether the same danger is also threatening the literature of the Anglo-Saxon world, Eliot draws an analogy between the language in which classical work is written and the arable land which, after giving an abundant harvest over a long period and thus exhausting the cultivated ground, ends up yielding a diminishing crop and being left in fallow,<sup>116</sup> not for some generation, but, so to speak, forever, as was the case with Roman literature after the birth of Vergil's classical work that had, in his view, exhausted and drained all the creative potential of the language,<sup>117</sup> making it sterile to such an extent that there was almost no place left for any of the future generations of the men of letters to fully display their creativity.

There is, in Eliot's view, only one, albeit extreme, way out of this hopeless situation, and to illustrate this point, he draws biological analogy between the language in which a classical work is written and the dying fruit from the seed of which a new fruit grows<sup>118</sup> and a new life begins, implying that the language itself, as was the case with Latin, must die so as to make it possible for a new, young idiom, such as Italian, to be, so to speak, born from its seeds, an idiom in which the new classical work, the *Divine Comedy*,<sup>119</sup> could only have been created after centuries have passed between Vergil and Dante. This raised Eliot's hopes since, due to the lack of a true classic in the literature of the Anglo-Saxon world,<sup>120</sup> the English language still resembled arable land not much used for agriculture that has enormous potential for producing a bountiful crop, i.e. either the standard or universal classic.

As the birth of the classic is one of the topics dealt with in Dio's *Olympic Discourse*, we must take this excellent opportunity to determine whether or not Eliot's theory of a classic is tenable. But the problem lies in the fact that in Dio the mentioned topic is intertwined with other topics and that the author conveys his attitude in a symbolic and enigmatic manner, with the result that the last part of

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115. *What is a Classic?* in Frank Kermode (ed.), *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot* (New York: Publishers Ferrar, Strauss and Giroux), 1975.

116. *Ibid.*, 125: ... the great poet ... exhausts not a form only, but the language of his time ...

117. *Ibid.*: ... every supreme poet ... tends to exhaust the ground he cultivates, so that it must, after yielding a diminishing crop, finally be left in fallow for some generation.

118. *Ibid.*, 124: ... after Virgil ... no great development was possible, until the Latin language became something different.

119. *Ibid.*: ... in the *Divine Comedy*, if anywhere, we find the classic in a modern European language.

120. *Ibid.* 121: ... we have no classic age and no classic poet, in English.

his discourse, essentially based on *plasma*, is polysemous. Although formal characteristic of Dio's discourse such as putting his own views on art into someone's mouth, otherwise Socrates' or rather Plato's favourite stylistic device, provides an excellent opportunity for unravelling the riddles of the text, only the fact that the last part of Dio's discourse, influenced heavily by Socrates' conversations on art with the leading exponents of painting and sculpture of his own time in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Parrhasius<sup>121</sup> and Cleito<sup>122</sup> respectively, makes it possible for us to capture the essence of things by providing a key to understanding Dio's discourse, as we will see shortly.

We are talking here not only about Dio's inspiration but also unreserved acceptance of Socrates' point of view expressed in the mentioned conversations on art, as can be inferred from the fact that he slightly varies Socrates' attitude to painting—which, according to the great philosopher, should aspire to meet its lofty goal by representing the invisible, that is, the reflection which the states of mind find in the face and the attitudes of the body (whether still or in motion) of a truly beautiful, good and lovable character<sup>123</sup>—by extending it to sculpture and claiming that sculptors should seek to indicate that which is invisible and unportrayable by means of something portrayable and visible, and this, in Dio's view, can only be achieved by using the function of a symbol<sup>124</sup> whereby he accidentally revealed key elements of his poetics applied in an exemplary manner to the *Olympic Discourse*.

What this symbolism looks like in detail, can be inferred from the reflection that Socrates' attitude to art, as expressed in his conversation with the other major exponent of fine arts of his own time, the sculptor Cleito, found in Dio. What we are talking about is an extreme form of idealism such as seeking to indicate in much harder, rock-like, i.e. sculptural material that which is invisible so as to make it possible for the chiselled figures to assume characteristics of vitality by giving the impression of their state of mind.<sup>125</sup> There are reasonable grounds for the assumption that in Socrates' conversations with Parrhasius and Cleito the borderline between the fields of art and literature has become fluid, and that what applies to art also applies to literature which, quite in keeping with Socrates'

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121. *Memorabilia*, 3, 10, 1-5.

122. *Ibid.*, 3, 10, 6-8.

123. *Ibid.*, 3, 10, 5: ka<sup>^</sup> tÕ megaloprepšj te ka<sup>^</sup> TMleuqšrion ka<sup>^</sup> ... tÕ swfronikÕn te ka<sup>^</sup> frÕnimon ... di| toà prosèpou ka<sup>^</sup> di| tîn schmfwtwn ka<sup>^</sup> ~stètwn ka<sup>^</sup> kinoumsnwn ènqrèpwn diafa...nei ...

124. *Olympic Discourse*, 59, where Dio speaks of representing the invisible such as God's mind by means of the visible, i.e. a human body as a vessel to contain intelligence (plēstèj sumbōlou dunēmei crēmēnoi).

125. Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 3, 10, 8: de< tÕn èndriantopoiÕn t| tÁj yucÁj ærga tū eždei proseikēzein.



ideal, must, like art itself, assume characteristics of the living and breathing word praised in hymnal tunes in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>126</sup>

Dio himself understood sufficiently well the point of Socrates' brief theses on art, and decided to elaborate on them by putting them in a wider perspective so as to be in a position to not only make parallelisms and relationships between the fields of art and literature more visible but also to show what a creative and skillful approach to a rich legacy of Greek literature should look like. Phidias who chisels out the statue of Olympian Zeus basing himself on the famous Homeric lines<sup>127</sup> symbolizes Dio's approach to the mentioned legacy as opposed to Homer who, to put it with Eliot, stands for the arable land of Greek literature left in fallow after giving an abundant harvest over a long period.

Far from being gripped by a sense of helplessness and lack of creativity in emulation of Homer, something that was, in Eliot's view, bound to happen, Dio, wearing the mask of Phidias, prides himself on the difficulty of the challenge which borders on the impossible and by far exceeds the efforts made by Homer when composing his poems in so far as he "must have worked out for himself a design that shows each subject," as is the case with the statue of Olympian Zeus, "in one single posture, and that too a posture that admits of no movement, so perfected that it will comprise within itself the whole of the god's nature and power."<sup>128</sup> By contrast, the poets have total freedom with regard to their creations, as evident from the fact that it is very easy for them "to include very many shapes and all sorts of attitudes in their poetry, adding periods of movement and rest to them, and actions and spoken words,"<sup>129</sup> as a result of which "they have an additional advantage in the matter of difficulty and that of time"<sup>130</sup> when compared to the sculptors.

To illustrate the points, Dio's Phidias draws the attention to the fact that his work often takes many years, and that he "must keep the very same image in his mind continuously until he finishes the work on his creation,"<sup>131</sup> as opposed to the poet who, "when moved by a single impulse of his soul, draws forth an immense volume of verses, as if from gushing spring of water, before the vision and the conception he had grasped leave him and flow away."<sup>132</sup> This testimony gains in importance all the more, since it seems that Dio while delivering his

126. 274b-278e.

127. *Iliad*, 1, 528-530:  $\tilde{A}$  ka<sup>^</sup> kuanšVsin <sup>TM</sup>p' NfrÚsi neàse Kron...wn: / çmbrÒsiai d' Ýra ca<tai <sup>TM</sup>perrèsanto Ýnaktoj / kratÒj çp' çqanètoio, mšgan d' <sup>TM</sup>šlixen / "Olumpon ...

128. *Olympic Discourse*, 70: ... èn scÁma kèsthj e,,kÒnoj çnfgkh e,,rgfsqai, ka<sup>^</sup> toàto çk...nhton ka<sup>^</sup> mšnon, èste t<sup>3/4</sup>n p©san <sup>TM</sup>n aØtù toà qeoà xullabe<n fÚsin ka<sup>^</sup> dÚnamin.

129. *Ibid.*: toj dè poihta<j pollfj tinaj morfj ka<sup>^</sup> pantodap<sub>i</sub> e<sub>ç</sub>dh perilabe<n tí poi»sei ·@dion, kin»seij te ka<sup>^</sup> 'suc...aj prostiqšntaj aÚto<j, Ópwj "n kfstote pršpein 'gíntai ...

130. *Ibid.*: ... ka<sup>^</sup> prÒsestin, oïmaitÓ tÁj calepÒthtoj ka<sup>^</sup> tÕ toà crÒnou.

131. *Ibid.*, 71: tÕ dè pèntwn calepètaton, çnfgkh paramšnein tù dhmiourgù t<sup>3/4</sup>n e,,kÒna <sup>TM</sup>n tí yucl t<sup>3/4</sup>n aÚt<sup>n</sup> çe..., mšcrij "n <sup>TM</sup>ktelšsV tÕ çrgon.

132. *Ibid.*, 70.

*Olympic Discourse* kept “the very same image” in his mind, and before we ascertain what the mentioned image looks like, we ought to see what implications the expression *gushing spring of words*, used by Phidias, or rather Dio to characterize poetic technique, has for grasping the oration’s message. In other words, we will need to ascertain whether the mentioned expression, apart from Homeric poems, relates to some other authors and genres.

In line of the above mentioned evidences concerning Dio’s poetics, as expressed in his two short essays on Homer and Socrates, there appears to be a ready answer in so far as Socrates himself resembles at times a gushing spring drawing forth an immense amount of words, as is otherwise the case with his discourses in the *Phaedrus* where his style is explicitly characterized by none other than himself as dithyrambic, i.e. poetic.<sup>133</sup> Having in mind Dio’s tendency to use symbols and enigmas it would be logical to assume that he takes the term ‘gushing spring’ to mean not only Homeric and Socratic legacy but also what is most exemplary in a rich heritage of Greek literature. Creative approach to this legacy was, as it seems, only possible through its symbolist elaboration,<sup>134</sup> as expressed in enigmas and hidden allusions.

We encounter such a concealed political allusion—as was otherwise the case with one of the opening passages from the discourse where we find an implicit characterization of the author as a man of letters who must not express his opinions frankly and plainly<sup>135</sup>—where we can hardly expect to, that is, in one of the final passages from the discourse, in which Phidias, or rather Dio himself explains his poetical principles, which in itself speaks volumes about both the far-reaching proportions of dictatorship and censorship under Roman rule in the early phase of the Second Sophistic and the political relevance of the *Olympic Discourse*. Thus in the mentioned passage Dio’s Phidias tells us how he carefully selected Homeric epithets of Zeus such as *Pater kai Basileus* (‘Father and King’), *Polieus* (‘Protector of Cities’), *Phlios* (‘God of Friendship’), *Hetaireios* (‘God of Comradeship’), *Hikesios* (‘Protector of Suppliants’), *Xenios* (‘God of Hospitality’), *Ktesios kai Epikarpios* (‘Giver of Wealth and Increase’) and *Homogneios* (‘Guardian of the Race’)<sup>136</sup> so as to make it possible for their visualization to give an impression of a peaceful and gentle deity, as is fitting for a protector and guardian of a harmonious and undivided Greece,<sup>137</sup> and this harmonious and undivided Greece is an ideal for which Isocrates was striving through his political

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133. *Phaedrus*, 238d.: Ἰσὼς ἄρα πολλῶν καὶ ἀπορροῦν ὁμιλίῳ τοῦ Ἰσοκράτους, ἡ μὲν  
καὶ τὸ πρῶτον οὐκ ἔστιν ὀρθῶς διειρημένον ἐπισημαστέον.

134. Cf. n. 123.

135. Cf. n. 84.

136. *Olympic Discourse*, 75: Ζεὺς γὰρ μόνος ἐστὶν Πάτερ καὶ Βασίλειος ἡ ἀπορροῦν καὶ  
Πολιεύς τε καὶ Φιλίος καὶ Ἡταίρειος ... Ἰκσιόης τε καὶ Ξενίου καὶ Ἐπικαρπίου ... Ὁμιλιόνης ...  
Κτησιόης.

137. *Ibid.*, 74: Ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἐπισημαστέων καὶ πανταχοῦ παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἐπισημαστέον καὶ Ἐπισημαστέον  
τῶν ἐπισημαστέων ἡ ἀπορροῦν.

activity, clearly inspired, as it seems, by Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades*, which in itself makes us even more aware of Dio's strong feeling of solidarity and mental affinity to Isocrates' political course of action.

Dio made his political message even more clear by stating that while designing the statue of Olympian Zeus he left out of consideration other attributes of Zeus as used by Homer to point out his aggressive and warlike nature, as evidenced by the fact that he is also represented by the poet as the god who continually sends the lightning's flash, portending war and destruction of many,<sup>138</sup> or a mighty downfall of rain,<sup>139</sup> or of hail<sup>140</sup> or of snow,<sup>141</sup> or who stretches the dark blue rainbow across the sky, the symbol of war,<sup>142</sup> or who sends a shooting star, a dread portent to sailors or soldiers,<sup>143</sup> or who sends a grievous strife upon Greeks and barbarians so as to inspire tired and despairing men with unceasing love for war and battle.<sup>144</sup> When Dio's Phidias further says that it was neither possible to represent these attributes of Zeus by his art nor should he ever have desired to do so had it been possible,<sup>145</sup> we can fully comprehend the real extent of his aversion to all types of militarism and, by the same token, to all things Roman despite his best efforts to conceal every political allusion.

On account of the fact that Dio, as we have already seen, applies the method of sculpture, i.e. that of Phidias, it remains to be seen what was "the very same image" that Dio kept continuously in his mind while delivering his speech at Olympia, in other words, it is yet to be ascertained what that is around which the whole discourse on man's first conception of god revolves. At the very end of his discourse, Dio reveals to us that Phidias so designed the features of the face of Zeus that the statue seems to convey the impression that it is reciting verses from the final book of the *Odyssey* that speak of Odysseus' playful criticism of his father who, enjoying no good care and suffering woeful old age, and, despite all this, being beset by no lack of skill, tends his garden due to, among other things, his being driven out of the palace by the reckless suitors courting his daughter-in-law, Penelope, a criticism that precedes the recognition scene (anagnorisis) involving revelation of his own true identity.

The citation itself is polysemous, as evident from the fact that Dio has assigned it the function of the bearer of his two secret political messages that could not be deciphered without noticing his clever play on the fusion of mythical

138. Ibid., 78: sunecij dè çstréptonta <sup>TM</sup>p<sup>^</sup> polšmJ ka<sup>^</sup> fqor| pl»qouj ...

139. Ibid.: ... À <sup>TM</sup>p' Ômbrwn Øperbolí ...

140. Ibid.: ... À calfzhj ...

141. Ibid.: ...À ciÒnoj ...

142. Ibid.: ... À tanÚonta kuanÁnĭrin, toà polšmou xÚmbolon ...

143. Ibid.: ... À çstšra pšmponta xunecej spinqÁraj çpobellonta, deinŌn tšraj naÚtaj À stratiètaj.

144. Ibid.: ... À <sup>TM</sup>pipšmponta ærin çrgalšan "Ellhsi ka<sup>^</sup> barbæroj, éste ærwta <sup>TM</sup>mbellein polšmou ka<sup>^</sup> mæchj ŷpauston kæmnousin çnqrèpoj ka<sup>^</sup> çpeirhkŌsin ...

145. Ibid., 79: ... oŪ m¾an oŪdè parŌn °qšlhsa g' ŷn pote (di| tÁj tšcnhj mime«sqai).

and historical time. And the play might not be observed without noticing subtle transitions between the concrete and the figurative (symbolic). In other words, Odysseus' playful criticism of his father directed at his lack of good care, his painful old age, his squalid appearance and his wretched clothes, all of which can be encompassed by the overall notion of the lack of body care, or rather body *epimeleia*, underwent in Dio a shift in meaning from the material to the spiritual, i.e. from 'body care' to 'the acquisition of intelligence related care' (the true *epimeleia*), as evidenced by the fact that Dio finds it hard to meet complete indifference of festival visitors to the care of the mind (*sophia*), which leads us to the key terms of Socrates' political testament, such as *sophia* and *epimeleia*, being at the same time the key words of both Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Isocrates' self-interpretation in the *Antidosis*.

Now we can clearly see that Dio concluded his *Olympic Discourse* in the best way possible with the hidden allusion to both Socrates' political testament and the Greece of his own time which reminded him of Odysseus' residence occupied by the reckless suitors symbolizing the Romans. Liberation from Roman imperial rule would require a rebirth of not only Odysseus but also Diomedes whose political course of action should be in keeping with the guiding ideas of Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades*, such as *sophia* (*enkrateia*) and *epimeleia*. That was the "very same image" that Dio kept continuously in his mind while delivering his discourse at Olympia.

Overwhelming evidence has shown that, far from being based on the rules of the art of rhetoric, the *Olympic Discourse* is divided in three almost equal parts, with each of them representing one of the categories of narration (fable, myth and plasma), quite in keeping with attitudes expressed in Dio's short essay on Homer and Socrates and Isocrates' "palinode" in the *Panathenaicus*.

## Conclusion

Close analysis of Dio's *Olympic Discourse* showed a wealth of detail, thanks to which we were able to see the poetics of the great orator of Prusa in a new light and in all its aspects, with those political and strategic gaining in importance, among other things, due to not being noticed in previous research on the subject. As far as the political aspect of Dio's poetics is concerned, of primary importance is his aversion to Roman rule as well as to all things Roman, conveyed through the form of symbols and concealed political allusions, which in itself speaks volumes about the scale of the censorship conducted by the ruling circles of the empire in the early phase of the Second Sophistic. Of equal importance is the fact that the *Olympic Discourse* provided us with more details on Dio's tirades against the sophistic, as a result of which we can now be almost certain that his impassioned invective against the sophistic was mainly directed towards his contemporaries, the exponents of the Second Sophistic, which in itself sheds further light on this intellectual movement in its early phase, allowing us to

conclude that the mentioned sophistic was not at all a uniform phenomenon as alleged by Philostratus.

Dio's intense, emotional identification with Socrates suggested a strategic aspect of his poetics, a deeper historical perspective on which may be gained only after obtaining insight into how he borrowed the central principles of his poetics, as expressed in his two fairly short essays on Socrates, from Isocrates' palinode in the *Panathenaicus*. This in itself allowed for the conclusion that Dio aspired to a noble ambition to join in the project of putting into practice the key ideas of Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades* just as did Isocrates, one of the mentioned testament's first executors. The very fact that Dio, unlike Isocrates who attached special significance to the literary aspect of the mentioned key ideas, lays stress on their ethical dimension, may explain all the dichotomies within the sophistic movement of the first two centuries AD, as evident from the fact that a large majority of its exponents showed a preference for the literary-dialectical, and, by the same token, rhetorical principles, as expressed in the second, analytical part of the *Phaedrus*, over the testament's ethical components as advocated for by Socrates in the *Alcibiades* and, above all, in his legend, Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.

The significance of the *Olympic Discourse* can also be inferred from the fact that it allows us to see how the literary aspect of Dio's poetics is, too, essentially based on the legend of Socrates in so far as we encounter in it what might be characterized as a detailed elaboration of the theses on art, put forward in summary form by Socrates in his conversation with the major exponents of painting and sculpture of his own time in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. This finding surpassed all our expectations in so far as it enabled us to conclude that the principles of the new rhetoric broadly outlined in the *Phaedrus* won an overwhelming victory against the tremendously impressive system of ancient rhetoric in Dio's time, as evidenced by the fact that following Homer's and Socrates' example by blending together history, myth, fable and *plasma* was increasingly seen as the only method capable of guaranteeing the author not only creativity but also immortality. Last but not least, these findings will enable us to see the whole of Dio's work in a deeper perspective, and all the aspects of the Second Sophistic as a phenomenon as well.

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