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Sophistic, Eristic and Philosophy in Isocrates' Proemium to *Helen*

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The proemium to the Encomium of Helen has revealed itself to be a perfect example of how interesting the study of Greek literature is, in so far as what barely seemed likely to yield promising results, namely a prologue to one of the least favourite literary genres, opened up new perspectives for unravelling the secrets of Isocrates' allusive technique, the major one being that his polemic in the encomium was not launched against all the spiritual currents of his time, as previously thought, but only against the Sophistic, eristic and Antisthenes, his rival in a bitter struggle for the legacy of Socrates. After a long and deep analysis of the text, we came to the conclusion that Isocrates should be viewed as the forerunner of the new sophistic movement, instead of being regarded as "organizer of the spirit of the ancient sophistic," as is evident from the fact that his method of montage, applied to the encomium as a whole and essentially based on the Socratic and Platonic concepts, won general acceptance among the exponents of the Second Sophistic.

Introduction: Proemium Filled with all Manners of Devices and Packed with Enigmas

The very fact that Isocrates' *Encomium of Helen* is preceded by the proemium (1–15 or 4 Teubner pages in length), which drew the attention of Aristotle due to what appeared at first sight to be a loose connection between it and the main body of the encomium,[1] has already indicated that his work is filled with all manners of devices and packed with enigmas, the solution of which essentially depended on obtaining an answer to the key question: what was the author's attitude towards the ancient sophistic and other intellectual currents of his own age? To tell the truth, the

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[1]*Rh.* 3 14.1414b5: οὐθὲν γὰρ οἰκεῖον ὑπάρχει τοῖς ἐριστικοῖς καὶ Ἑλένῃ. As it seems, Isocrates was not only Socrates and Plato's favourite orator but also Aristotle's, as can be inferred from the fact that he even commended the orator for his approach by saying that "even if he wanders from the point, this is more appropriate than that the speech should be monotonous" (ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἐὰν ἐκτοπίσῃ, ἁρμόττει μὴ ὅλον τὸν λόγον ὁμοειδῆ εἶναι), as translated by J. H. Freese (LCL). Aristotle may also have alluded to Isocrates' encomium when in the following passage from the *Rhetoric* (3 14.1415a4) he said that exordia may be derived from advice, citing the praise of Paris as an example of this, because he who is neither famous nor worthless remains, although he is good, obscure, which in itself is a piece of advice, something that fits well with Paris' virtues that are praised by Isocrates in the main body of his encomium (41–48). The very fact that Aristotle has a broadly positive view of Isocrates' approach applied to the proemium of his encomium provides the best possible proof that it is not possible to speak of the mutual animosity between the philosopher and the orator, as claimed by Blass (1892, 64–67). In this connection, it should be noted that Isocrates (436–338 B.C.) was an Athenian orator and the founder of the most influential school in the history of rhetoric, the main aim of which was to care above all for polished expression, as distinguished from Plato's Academy. The school numbered among its pupils men of eminence from all over the Greek world.

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enigma of providing the encomium with the proemium has attracted the attention of scholars chiefly at the beginning of the research in the nineteenth century,[2] a research that ended without producing any tangible results since the proemium's multi-layered structure was, unfortunately, not noticed. The reason for this lies in the failure to detect models used by Isocrates for conceiving his proemium, which was, as it seems, primarily a consequence of the false assumption that it was in no way possible to obtain fundamental results from what was widely regarded as one of the least favourite literary genres.

What kind of result is being referred to here can be inferred from the fact that it is symbol-laden, in so far as it turned out that in conceiving the opening passages for his proemium Isocrates derived his ideas primarily from the *Sophist*, in which the exponents of sophistry are characterized in a rather derogatory comparison as cunning beasts (226a: ποικίλον θηρίον), jugglers and imitators of realities (235a: γόητα καὶ μιμητὴν ἄρα θετέον αὐτόν τινα), as distinguished from the *Statesman* where they are even identified with centaurs and satyrs (303c: Κενταυρικὸν καὶ Σατυρικόν τινα θίασον). The very fact that we encounter the same characterization of the sophists of the older generation in Dio Chrysostom's *Fourth Discourse on Kingship*[3] points not only to the continuity of ideas and concepts, but also to the conclusion that with his choice of models for the proemium Isocrates implied his irreconcilable and hostile attitude not, as was erroneously thought, towards Plato, but towards the ancient sophistic and eristic and their entire legacy, as discussed in detail below.

What we encounter already in the two opening passages from the proemium is a kind of *montage*, or rather amalgamation of ideas, with three of them derived from the *Sophist* (242d-e; 240c; 251b), one from the *Euthydemus* (303e–304a), the *Parmenides* (127d) and the *Phaedrus* (261d), and two from Aristotle: one from the *Metaphysics* (Δ 29.1024b33) and the other from the *Physics* (Θ 8.263a3), which, through subtle indications, gives us a hint against whom Isocrates' polemic is directed. The fact that the aforementioned method, as we will see later, enjoyed universal popularity in the period of the new sophistic gives us the right to speak of Isocrates as its forerunner, or rather originator, a point that will be further confirmed by the results obtained from solving the enigmas in the proemium itself. The very fact that Isocrates chooses Plato and Aristotle as his models has further undermined the argument about his hostility towards the leading philosophers of his time,[4] as is

[2]A good overview of the literature about previous research on the subject and the unity of the encomium in Münscher (1916, 2180–2185) and Blass (1892, 242–246). As to the unity of the encomium, it should be noted that in recent times scholars used to tackle the problem of the proemium in almost the same way as it was dealt with at the beginning of research by regarding it as thematically independent of the encomium, with Viidebaum (2021*,* 70) and Kennedy (1958, 80) representing a rare exception to the trend, the latter of whom sought to establish the unity of the entire speech by interpreting it as a Panhellenic document. Jaeger (1944, 67), Buchheit (1960) and Heilbrunn (1977, 147), to name just a few, took the opposite stance on the issue.

[3]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 to both the monstrous brood of the Centaurs (130), and unruly and untrained dogs deceiving others in the hunting (34).

[4] Cf. Blass (1892) 28–41; 64–67. See also Gemelli Marciano (2007, 181) where Isocrates is regarded as a tough opponent of Plato on the basis of evidence from the *Busiris,* 28.

evident, among other things, from the fact that one of the two ideas derived from Aristotle, namely the one from *Metaphysics*, played, as we shall see later, a crucial role in conveying a key message not only of the proemium but also of the entire encomium.

What served as a purely formal model for both the opening (1) and the second passage from the proemium (2–3), being of high importance for the interpretation of the encomium, was the passage from the *Sophist* (242d–e), in which the Eleatic Stranger gives a survey of the teachings about realities and principles in the Eleatic,[5] Ionian,[6] Sicilian,[7] early Ionian (Pherecydes)[8] and one unnamed school, with the aim of pointing out the complete confusion regarding their number which ranges from one to three: one reality in the school of the Eleatics, two in the teaching of Heraclitus, Empedocles and Pherecydes and three in that of the unnamed school. It is precisely the last-mentioned teaching that in the opinion of the Stranger provides a vivid example of improvisation and arbitrariness in the field of ontology, which reminded him of children's fairy tales, as can be concluded from the fact that the three aforementioned realities, as he put it, occasionally wage wars with each other, only to make peace between them and enter into a kind of marriage in order to produce offspring.[9]

That Isocrates used the aforementioned passage from the *Sophist* as a formal model to set forth his key theses in the opening passage of the proemium can be inferred from the fact that in the proemium's second passage we also encounter the same contrast between one and many whose similarity to both the aforementioned passage from the *Sophist* and the opening passage from the proemium was all the more difficult to notice as the author strove to the best of his ability to remove all traces of his heavy dependence on Plato in setting forth his theses. Leaving aside the aforementioned contrast between one and many, at first sight there was nothing to indicate any similarity between the two opening passages from Isocrates' proemium and the aforementioned passage from the *Sophist*, which in itself is a clear indication of how big the problem is. This is further evidenced by the fact that enigmas in the proemium's second passage had to be solved first as a necessary prerequisite for shedding more light on the puzzles in the opening passage in which the aforesaid contrast is only implicitly present, a contrast of paramount significance for ascertaining Isocrates' attitudes towards the Sophistic. Hence we will proceed in reverse order by

[5] 242d: τὸ Ἐλεατικὸν ἔθνος ἀπὸ Ξενοφάνους τε καὶ ἔτι πρόσθεν ἀρξάμενον, ὡς ἑνὸς ὄντος τῶν πάντων καλουμένων. It is noteworthy to mention that that's the only reference in the dialogues of Plato to Xenophanes as the founder of the Eleatic school. Cf. Gemelli Marciano (2007, 258).

[6] 242d–e: Ἰάδες δὲ καὶ Σικελαί [...] Μοῦσαι συνενόησαν [...] ὅτι ἀσφαλέστατον λέγειν ὡς τὸ ὂν πολλά τε καὶ ἕν ἐστιν, ἔχθρᾳ δὲ καὶ φιλίᾳ συνέχεται.

[7] Ibid.· Σικελαί Μοῦσαι, i.e. Empedocles.

[8] 242d: δύο δὲ ἕτερος εἰπών, ὑγρὸν καὶ ξηρὸν ἢ θερμὸν καὶ ψυχρόν, συνοικίζει τε αὐτα καὶ ἐκδίδωσι.

[9] 242c–d: μῦθόν τινα ἕκαστος φαίνεταί μοι διηγεῖσθαι παισὶν ὡς οὖσιν ἡμῖν, ὁ μὲν ὡς τρία τὰ ὄντα, πολεμεῖ δὲ ἀλλήλοις ἐνίοτε αὐτῶν ἄττα πῃ, τοτὲ δὲ καὶ φίλα γιγνόμενα γάμους τε καὶ τόκους [...] παρέχεται. The fact that realities and principles enter into marriage and produce offspring implies the inherent power of multiplication so that the contrast between one and many is fully apparent in this passage from the *Sophist*.

first focusing our attention on the second passage from the proemium with the aim of applying the results obtained to the solution of the enigmas in the opening passage.

The Second Passage of the Proemium (2–3): Isocrates' most Cherished Ideals against the Background of Zeno's Dichotomies and Stilpo's Eristic

By saying that, except for the contrast between one and many, there was nothing to indicate the similarity between the two opening passages from the proemium and the passage from the *Sophist* we mean above all the fact that out of five philosophical schools, against which a polemic was launched in the passage from the *Sophist*, only the Eleatic school of philosophy is mentioned in the proemium's second passage or, to be more precise, the two of its major exponents, Zeno and Melissus, whose teachings, along with those of Gorgias, are subjected to harsh criticism, as is evident from Isocrates' assertion that Melissus "made it his task to find proofs that, although things in nature are infinite, the whole is one."[10] When in his criticism of Zeno Isocrates highlights the fact that the aforementioned exponent of the Eleatic school "ventured to prove the same things as possible and again as impossible" (*Hel.* 3: Ζήνωνα τὸν ταὐτὰ δυνατὰ καὶ πάλιν ἀδύνατα πειρώμενον ἀποφαίνειν), we can clearly see that he derives this idea from the passage of Aristotle's *Physics* in which Zeno's paradoxes of motion are characterized as impossible because One, or rather one specific distance, no matter how determined it might be, turns out to be infinite, as does its half, also divided into infinite number of halves that are to be covered.[11] As a result of which, motion and rest,[12] one and many are identical to each other, which implies that one and the same thing can be simultaneously similar and dissimilar,[13] in motion and at rest,[14] as stated by Socrates in his criticism of Zeno and Parmenides' doctrine. What is implicitly enclosed within this sharp criticism of Zeno is his method of dichotomy, which will turn out to be one of the crucial facts in an attempt to solve enigmas in the opening passage from the proemium, as we shall see later.

So now the important question arises as to why only the aforementioned exponents of the Eleatic school along with Gorgias – who even dared to assert that nothing exists of the things that are (*Hel*. 3: οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἔστιν), and thus outdid both Zeno and Melissus in paradoxicalities – are the subject of Isocrates' criticism in the second passage from the proemium. It is much easier to find an answer in the case of Gorgias,

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[10]*Hel.* 3: ἀπείρων τὸ πλῆθος πεφυκότων τῶν πραγμάτων ὡς ἑνὸς ὄντος τοῦ παντὸς ἐπεχείρησεν ἀποδείξεις εὑρίσκειν. Cf. Plat. *Soph.* 242d–e: (ἀσφαλέστατον [...] λέγειν ὡς τὸ ὂν πολλά τε καὶ ἕν) and 240c (κινδυνεύει τοιαύτην τινὰ πεπλέχθαι συμπλοκὴν τὸ μὴ ὂν τῷ ὄντι, καὶ μάλα ἄτοπον). In this connection, it should be said that all translations of the passages from the *Helen* are by L. van Hook (LCL).

[11]Θ 8.263a3: ταῦτα δ' ἄπειρα, τὰ δ' ἄπειρα ἀδύνατον διεξελθεῖν. Cf. Arist. *Phys.* Θ 8.263a3: τοῦτο δ' ὁμολογουμένως ἐστὶν ἀδύνατον.

[12]Cf. *Phys.* Z 9.239b30: τρίτος δ' ὁ νῦν ῥηθεὶς ὅτι ἡ ὀιστὸς φερομένη ἕστηκεν. συμβαίνει δὲ παρὰ τὸ λαμβάνειν τὸν χρόνον συγκεῖσθαι ἐκ τῶν νῦν.

[13]Plat. *Parm.* 127d: πῶς [...] ὦ Ζήνων, τοῦτο λέγεις; εἰ πολλά ἐστι τὰ ὄντα, ὡς ἄρα δεῖ αὐτὰ ὅμοιά τε εἶναι καὶ ἀνόμοια, τοῦτο δὲ δὴ ἀδύνατον.

[14]Plat. *Phaedr.* 261d: τὸν οὖν Ἐλεατικὸν Παλαμίδην λέγοντα οὐκ ἴσμεν τέχνῃ, ὥστε φαίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀκούουσι τὰ αὐτα ὅμοια καὶ ἀνόμοια, καὶ ἓν καὶ πολλά, μένοντά τε αὖ καὶ φερόμενα;

in so far as we have good reasons to assume that he was mentioned in this purely philosophical context, chiefly because Isocrates regarded him not only as his rival who composed the encomium on the same theme but also as a specific follower of the ideas cultivated in the aforementioned school of philosophy.[15]

We will get the answer to the remaining question only if we carefully study the reflection of Zeno and Melissus' ideas in the ensuing centuries. Truth be told, what we are referring to here is almost exclusively Zeno's influence, in so far as we very rarely encounter Melissus' name in later doxographic literature, most likely because of Aristotle's scathing criticism of his personality in both the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics* where he is viewed as an uncouth[16] and, moreover, uneducated man,[17] which in itself was, as it seems, sufficient enough to undermine his authority in the centuries to come. Despite the fact that, in sheer contrast to Melissus, there is no mention at all of Zeno's name in later doxographic literature,[18] the influence he had on the men of letters in later times was fully evident, most likely as a result of Plato's account of him in both the *Parmenides* and the *Phaedrus*, in the latter of which he is characterized as a dialectician able to advocate on both sides of an issue.[19]

Due to his famous paradoxes, Zeno's influence on the men of letters in later times was not only evident but also considerable, as can be inferred from the fact that he was a favourite author among the exponents of the Megarian school of philosophy primarily interested in the creation of the so-called dialectical paradoxes,[20] as well as from the fact that, according to Gemelli Marciano (2013a, 125), Plato and his followers regarded his paradoxes of both plurality and motion as truly fundamental and thus worthy of careful studying and further elaboration. Xenocrates' usual practice of taking a version of Zeno's paradox of plurality, improved through discussion, as a starting point for his theory of indivisible line as the last limit of space is a telling example of this methodology.[21] That the influence of Zeno's paradoxes was considerable in later times can be seen in the fact that Aristotle analyses and disproves his paradoxes of motion and space in the books Z and Δ of his *Physics*,[22] which gave occasion for the later Neoplatonist Simplicius to defend Platonic interpretation of the paradoxes of plurality against the attacks to which it was exposed in commentaries on Aristotle.[23] And if we add the fact that Zeno's doctrine was also very popular among the exponents of philosophy of skepticism, who, unlike Plato and his followers, used his paradoxes of plurality to refute the existence

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[15]According to Seneca (*Ep*. 88.44), Zeno's doctrine is the same as that of Gorgias, i.e. *nihil esse*: *si Parmenidi* (scil. credo)*, nihil est praeter unum, si Zenoni, ne unum quidem*. This also explains why Gorgias is mentioned in this purely philosophical context.

[16]φορτικός (*Phys.* A 3.186a7).

[17]ἄγροικος (*Metaph.*A 5.986b25). Cf. Gemelli Marciano (2013b) 202.

[18]Cf. Gemelli Marciano (2013b) 125.

[19]Cf. DL IX 25 where Aristotle is quoted as saying that Zeno was the inventor of dialectic. Cf. also Timon's of Phlius view of Zeno as ἀμφοτερόγλωσσος ("doppelzüngig"), expressed in the same context.

[20]Gemelli Marciano (2013a) 125.

[21]*Alex. Aphr. ap. Simpl. In Phys*. 138, 3 (DK 29 A 22). Cf. Gemelli Marciano (2013a) 125.

[22]Z 9.239b9 (DK 29 A 25), Z 2.233a21 (DK 29 A 25), Θ 8.263a3 (Zenon 20 Mansfeld), Z 9. 239b14 (DK 29 A 25), Z 9.239b30 (DK 29 A 27), Z 9.239b5 (DK 29 A 27), Z 9.239b33 (DK 29 A 28); Δ 1.209a23 (DK 29 A 24), Δ 3.210b22 (DK 29 A 24). Cf. also Gemelli Marciano (2013a) 125.

[23] Gemelli Marciano (2013a) ibid.

of both one and many (Gemelli Marciano 2013a, 125), we will have a more complete picture of his influence in later times. Thus Zeno's teachings turned out to be the subject of an in-depth research in almost all schools of philosophy, which in itself represents a trend Isocrates was vehemently opposed to. And now we shall see the reason why.

As a result of this and other developments, Isocrates might become increasingly indignant about the fact that almost all schools of philosophy had been "infected by the virus" of paradox and that in the case of the Megarian school that virus mutated into forms of eristic, as can be inferred from Diogenes Laertius' short account of the teachings of Isocrates' contemporary Stilpo of Megara (II 113–120). Although Stilpo's eristic represented the very opposite of Isocrates' most cherished ideals of putting sound philosophical theories into political practice, the latter had an additional reason for being very dissatisfied with what was happening before his very eyes, as is evident from the fact that Stilpo even surpassed Socrates in popularity and that nearly the whole of Greece was attracted to him and joined the school of Megara," because he excelled all the rest in inventiveness and sophistry, as Diogenes Laertius put it, (II 113: τοσοῦτον δ᾽ εὑρεσιολογίᾳ καὶ σοφιστείᾳ προῆγε τοὺς ἄλλους). What was the most embarrassing for Isocrates was the fact that Stilpo turned out to be very skilful at drawing away disciples from other schools of philosophy, as can be inferred from the fact that he gained over the theorist Metrodorus and Timagoras of Gela from Theophrastus, Cleitarchus and Simmias from Aristotle the Cyrenaic philosopher; and as for dialecticians themselves, he drew away Paeonius from Aristides and made Diphilus of Bosporus and Myrmex, who had both come to refute him, his devoted adherents. If we take into account the fact that besides these Stilpo won over Crates the Cynic and Zeno the Stoic (DL II 114), we get the impression that almost all schools of philosophy were more or less receptive to his eristic.

What was affecting Isocrates deeply was the fact that Stilpo also proved to be very skilful at winning over the rhetoricians themselves, as was the case with Alcimus, the first orator in all Greece (114), and it is not implausible that Stilpo might have drawn away pupils from Isocrates' own school. It can be assumed with sufficient probability that the same state of affairs existed in the preceding period in the history of the school, with Eubulides of Miletus, Alexinus of Elis, Euphantus of Olynthus, Apollonius Cronus and Diodorus Cronus leaving an indelible mark on it, as can be inferred from the fact that, according to Diogenes Laertius (II 108–109), none other than Demosthenes attended the school of Eubulides, Euclides' disciple, and thereby improved his faulty pronunciation of the letter R. Given an earlier date of the *Helen*, it seems more likely that Isocrates' criticism of eristic was, as we will see shortly, directed, except for the likes of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, at Eubulides[24] and the period immediately preceding the time of Stilpo.

Thus all prerequisites are provided for focusing our attention on solving enigmas in the opening passage from the proemium in which we also encounter the

[24]He was, according to Diogenes Laertius (II, 108), the author of many dialectical, i.e. sophistical, arguments in an interrogatory form as, for instance, *The Liar* and *The Sorites*, whereby he may have fallen into disgrace in Isocrates' eyes, as can be inferred from the latter's strong criticism of Socrates' conversation with the exponents of eristic, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, in the *Euthydemus*. Cf. below n. 46.

contrast, albeit implicitly given, between one and many, the difference being that the aforementioned contrast is now transferred from the field of ontology to that of method and moreover applied to a fairly brief survey of the spiritual currents of Isocrates' own age, which is why it escaped the attention of the scholars. In other words, what is involved here is the contrast between one philosophically grounded method yielding one accurate and reliable result and sheer inventiveness, displayed on a great many themes and expressing itself, among other things, in speaking on both sides of the question and having as a consequence a lot of contradictory results arising from many provisional, ad hoc approaches to the subject, which in itself is so reminiscent of Zeno's teaching in which, in full accordance with Socrates' criticism of Parmenides' method in the *Phaedrus*, all the differences between one and many, similar and dissimilar, motion and rest, disappear. We are now going to turn to the contrast in the opening passage from the proemium, which is more complex than the one we have discussed so far due to its being twofold.

The Opening Passage of the Proemium (1): Isocrates' Play on Contrasts and the Method of the New Rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*

When we say "more complex," we mean above all a play on contrasts, one of which is formal, and the other is of a substantial nature. The formal contrast is, as already said, created by barely perceptible allusions to the two aforementioned passages from the *Sophist* (242d–e,[25] 240c[26]), as distinguished from a substantial one, which resulted from combining the patterns just mentioned with the content and key message of the remaining passage from the *Sophist* (251b) as well as with the content of the crucially important passages from the *Euthydemus* (303e–304a) and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Δ 29.1024b33), and what this looks like in detail we will see shortly. What is involved here is a daemonic combination of patterns that necessarily had to cloud the view of researchers, which in itself speaks more than anything else about the true nature of not only Isocrates' but also the new sophistic, as is evident from the fact that Isocrates combines ideas derived from the aforementioned passages in such a good way that the human eye, as Philostratus would put it,[27] is by no means able to determine where the conceptual mimesis of one passage ends and the same one of another begins.

The very fact that the theses, as expressed in the aforementioned brief survey of spiritual currents in the opening of the proemium, do not refer, as was to be expected, to the tendencies in rhetoric of Isocrates' time, but, quite to the contrary, to some key postulates of the schools of philosophy, is a clear indication of who specifically might be responsible for establishing a close relationship between rhetoric and philosophy[28] and enforcing this tendency that will find its reflection in

[25]Cf. nn. 5–9.
[26]Cf. n. 10.
[27]*Im.* 2.2 (representation of centaur's dual nature in painting).
[28]This is evident by the fact that 16 out of 26 instances of his self-interpretation in the *Antidosis* refer either to *philosophia* (41, 50, 147, 162, 170, 175, 176, 181, 183, 195, 205, 209, 215, 243, 247) or *philosophuntes* (250), as opposed to 8 instances in which the author identifies as a sophist (148, 155,

Eunapius' *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, where the sophists of late antiquity are almost exclusively regarded as philosophers. This is evident not only by the title of the work,[29] but also by the lengthy prologue (453–457) dealing solely with the state of biographical sources for the philosophers of the aforementioned epoch and culminating in a short account of the lives of Plotinus and Porphyrius and their mutual relationship.

Isocrates' survey of particularly characteristic spiritual currents of his own age in the opening of the proemium begins with (1) the egoistic exponents of an unnamed school of thought "who were much pleased with themselves, if, after setting up an absurd and self-contradictory subject, they succeeded in discussing it in tolerable fashion,"[30] and it goes without saying that they were always driven by a desire to search for ever new topics, which in itself implies a great deal of subjects (= plurality, inventiveness, improvisation). Thereafter follows the mentioning of those (2) who have grown old "asserting that it is impossible to say, or to gainsay, what is false, or to speak on both sides of the same questions"[31] (which is equivalent to saying that only one thesis is possible) as well as those (3) "maintaining that courage and wisdom and justice are identical, and that we possess none of these as natural qualities, but that there is only one sort of knowledge", or rather method, as we shall see later, "concerned with them all"[32] (which is equivalent to saying that only one method is acceptable). And at the end of the opening passage Isocrates mentions those (4) who

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168, 197, 203, 220, 235, 237). The remaining two instances are also highly indicative of Isocrates' view of oratory, with both of them referring to *rhetores* (190, 256), i.e. his rivals regarded as exponents of a superficial and common training and moreover identified with *sykophantes* by the public opinion of his own age. But the problem lies in the fact that in the same narrow context terms 'philosophia' and 'sophistike' have the same meaning (195: *philosophy*, 197: *sophist*; 203: *sophist*, 205: *philosophy*) with the result that it appears at first sight not to be possible to discern where philosophy ends and where the Sophistic begins. But the appearances are deceptive, as is evident from the fact that in one of the aforementioned instances (155) the sophists of the older generation (Gorgias) are referred to as the "so-called sophists" in sharp contrast to his own art of speaking and philosophizing.

[29]As far as the title of Eunapius' work is concerned, the very fact that sophists are relegated to a position of secondary importance immediately strikes the eye, but the fact that they are mentioned together with philosophers is an enigma in itself, especially taking into account that a lengthy proemium to the *Lives* exclusively deals with the philosophers. What is involved here is a tautology, very likely influenced by Socrates' characterization of his own philosophy as a noble and true-born art of sophistry in the *Sophist* (231b: γένει γενναία σοφιστική). Cf. Philostratus' assertion (*VS*, 480–481) that methods of the philosophers and sophists are essentially identical since both are crucially based on divination, the only difference being that the philosophical method resembles the prophetic art which is controlled by man, or – one can also say – by *logos*, as distinguished from that of the sophists, reminding him of the style used by oracles and soothsayers, which in itself points to the doctrine of *mania* and *sophrosyne* alternately pulsating in the soul of philosopher, as distinguished from that of the rhapsode (poet), in which only *mania* palpitates, as expressed in both the myth of the winged chariot in the *Phaedrus* (244a–257b) and the emblematic image of poet and rhapsode in the *Ion* (533d), respectively. On the interrelatedness of *logos* and *mania* in Plato's philosophy cf. Reale (2000) 231 n. 132.

[30]εἰσί τινες οἱ μέγα φρονοῦσιν, ἢν ὑπόθεσιν ἄτοπον καὶ παράδοξον ποιησάμενοι περὶ ταύτης ἀνεκτῶς εἰπεῖν δυνηθῶσιν.

[31]καὶ καταγεγηράκασιν οἱ μὲν οὐ φάσκοντες οἷόν τ᾽ εἶναι ψευδῆ λέγειν οὐδ᾽ ἀντιλέγειν οὐδὲ δύω λόγω περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν πραγμάτων ἀντειπεῖν.

[32]οἱ δὲ διεξιόντες ὡς ἀνδρία καὶ σοφία καὶ δικαιοσύνη ταὐτόν ἐστι, καὶ φύσει μὲν οὐδὲν αὐτῶν ἔχομεν, μία δ᾽ ἐπιστήμη καθ᾽ ἁπάντων ἐστίν.

"waste their time in captious disputations that are not only entirely useless, but are sure to make trouble for their disciples" (which implicitly assumes a great many topics as well as many provisional, ad hoc approaches to the subject).[33]

If we take a closer look at Isocrates' theses on the spiritual currents of his own age we shall notice yet another of Isocrates' games of hide-and-seek, which consists in the fact that the first and the fourth thesis are essentially identical (a great many themes, inventiveness, absurdity, uselessness, many provisional, ad hoc approaches, creating problems involving the whole of society), which is also true for the second and the third one (only one thesis and one method are acceptable) so that one can rightly speak, instead of four theses, of the two pairs of theses, each of which can be regarded as a supplement to its own counterpart in the same group. In other words, the fourth thesis can be viewed as a specific supplement to the first, and the third thesis as a modification, or rather correction, of the second, something that will have, as we shall see later, far reaching consequences for the interpretation of the encomium. It isn't difficult at all to conclude that the relationship between, and the right order of, the theses is characterized by chiasmus which can be represented graphically as ABBA. And it is equally easy to conclude that by choosing to present his theses in the aforementioned form Isocrates wanted to conceal his heavy dependence upon the passages from the *Sophist* he took as a model.

This game of hide-and-seek was very difficult to perceive due to, among other things, the fact that in the opening passage of the proemium, which appeared at first sight to be randomly composed by design, there are no indications of contrasts as a stylistic device used by the author to set forth his theses, all the more so since their right order or the optimum grouping assumed, as we have already seen, the form of chiasmus. The failure to notice these barely visible contrasts in the opening of the proemium was the main reason why a polemic against all the spiritual currents of his own age, including the philosophy of Plato and Socrates, has been ascribed to Isocrates, but nothing, as we will see below, could be further from the truth.

The contrast of a formal nature in Isocrates' fairly brief presentation of his theses in the opening passage from the proemium is created by purely numerical relationships. Thus the contrast between one and many realities in the aforementioned passage from the *Sophist* becomes in the proemium the contrast between handling one and the same lofty philosophical subject matter – essentially based on only one acceptable method (*diairesis*) and moreover characterized by perfection[34] – and discoursing on a great deal of the most paradoxical, absurd and self-contradictory themes, having as a consequence a lot of wrong and inaccurate results arising from many provisional, ad hoc approaches to the subject (*Hel.* 8: τοσοῦτον δ' ἐπιδεδωκέναι πεποιήκασι τὸ ψευδολογεῖν). It should also be said that, no matter how perfect, handling a relevant theme does not necessarily exclude the possibility of supplementing, enlarging and elaborating on it,

[33]ἄλλοι δὲ περὶ τὰς ἔριδας διατρίβουσι τὰς οὐδὲν μὲν ὠφελούσας, πράγματα δὲ παρέχειν τοῖς πλησιάζουσι δυναμένας.

[34]As opposed to Zeno's dichotomies, a more natural way of partitioning the phenomenon is a necessary prerequisite for this, as is the case with one of the first attempts to give a definition of the Sophistic in the *Sophist* (224c–d), with *synagoge* appearing in it as one of the two opposite, alternating principles of the same method, as will be detailed below.

as can be inferred from the fact that, under Socrates' influence,[35] Isocrates looks upon his own encomium as an ideal model for others to compete with him within the framework of the same conceptions and ideas (*Hel.* 69: ἢν οὖν τινες βούλωνται ταῦτα διεργάζεσθαι καὶ μηκύνειν, οὐκ ἀπορήσουσιν ἀφορμῆς, ὅθεν Ἑλένην ἔξω τῶν εἰρημένων ἔξουσιν ἐπαινεῖν).

After all that has been said so far, it is no coincidence that half of the models used for conceiving the opening passage for the proemium were taken from the *Sophist* in which the ancient sophistic is met with scorn and harsh invectives, as evidenced by the fact that in the definitions of the aforementioned movement its exponents are, as already seen, identified with ignorant persons, jugglers, imitators of realities and even manipulators (*Soph*. 235a), with their art consisting only in forcing the others who converse with them to contradict themselves (268c-d). And it is certainly not coincidental that the key word in the aforementioned definition (θαυματοποιικὸν μόριον) found its reflection in the proemium itself (*thaumatopoiiai*).[36] What is involved here is a polemic Isocrates himself wanted to join, so as to prove himself to be, as we shall see later, worthy of the legacy of his great masters, Socrates and Plato, by trying to walk in their footsteps,[37]very well aware of the limits to his abilities. But he consistently tried to conceal his dependence upon his masters, as evidenced by the fact that he not only toned down the language of his polemic but also used, instead of the names of his rivals and adversaries, the generic and less specific term 'eristic' that has been wrongly associated with Socrates and Plato[38] in previous research on the subject, despite the fact that there was no reason for such an assumption. This is evident by the fact that the controversial wording *alloi de peri tas eridas diatribousi* in the fourth thesis clearly refers to the likes of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, or rather Eubulides of Miletus, namely the true exponents of the sophistical and the so-called philosophical eristic.

The very fact that the advice tinged with bitter irony, which Socrates gives to his interlocutors (Euthydemus and Dionysodorus) in the *Euthydemus* (304a), found its reflection in the fourth thesis – and what is being referred to here is his recommendation that they should beware of talking before a number of people and be content only with talking to each other by themselves, in private, and give this same counsel to their pupils also, namely that they should never converse with anybody except them and each other since their teaching poses a great threat to the common weal and the education of the youth – points to such a conclusion. The

[35]What is being referred to here are the philosopher's unrelenting efforts to improve and perfect the initial definition of a particular phenomenon, as was the case with the Sophistic in the *Sophist*.

[36]Cf. *Soph.* 268c–d (τὸ δὲ τῆς ἐναντιοποιολογικῆς εἰρωνικοῦ μέρους τῆς δοξαστικῆς [...] οὐ θεῖον ἀλλ᾽ ἀνθρωπικὸν τῆς ποιήσεως ἀφωρισμένον ἐν λόγοις τὸ θαυματοποιικὸν μόριον), Ισοχρ. *Ηελ.* 7 (πρὸς τὰς θαυματοποιίας διατελοῦσι) and 224a (θαυματοποιικήν τέχνην).

[37]Cf. *Phaedr.* 266b–c, where Socrates maintains that he regards anyone capable of looking at the same time towards One and Many and, as a result of this, of both analytically partitioning the phenomenon (*diairesis*) and synoptically reducing the partitioned to a single idea (*synagoge*) as a god in whose footsteps he would follow with religious fervour. Quite contrary to what is said, Heilbrunn (1977, 159) asserted that Isocrates was locked in conflict with both Plato (in the opening passage) and his fellow writers (in the rest of the encomium).

[38]Cf. Münscher (1916, 2181), where Plato is seen as Isocrates' opponent, with almost the same attitude taken by Kennedy (1958, 77), Lesky (1971, 632) and Eucken (1983*,* 44–56).

only difference is that Isocrates speaks of the troubles the proponents of this method make for their disciples in one such school, which can be explained by what was said above about his careful strategy of concealing his models.

Thus the contrast of a formal nature between one and many, as expressed in the *Sophist*, tends to become sharper and to grow into one of a substantial nature, as evidenced by the fact that, on the basis of what was said above about the approach applied in conceiving the proemium, it is logical to assume that Isocrates was also under the influence of the same contrast Socrates used in the *Phaedrus* to help his interlocutor understand his own method based on two opposite, alternating principles. One of the principles consists in perceiving the scattered particulars and bringing them together in one idea (*synagoge* – one),[39] and the other in dividing again by classes (*diairesis* – many) what was naturally brought together in one idea.[40] In two passages from the same context Socrates points out the ability to bring together in one idea the scattered particulars as a necessary prerequisite for making clear by definition any of the aforementioned scattered things, with any such attempt at definition presupposing a natural way of dividing the things (265e: μὴ ἐπιχειρεῖν καταγνύναι μέρος μηδέν), as opposed to Zeno's method of dichotomy and a geometrical way of dividing the things.

Thus in clarifying his method characterized by the two opposite, alternating principles (*diairesis, synagoge*), Socrates advocates what may be termed 'moderate definitional rigorism,'[41] something that Isocrates seems to have wholeheartedly adopted in the concluding remarks on his encomium in which he recommended it as a model for all those wishing to compete with him by dilating and dwelling upon the matters discussed by him, and moreover discovering many new arguments that relate to the subject of the praise. This is in accordance with both the principals of the new rhetoric, as outlined by Socrates in the *Phaedrus* (265c–e),[42] and the best state-building ideals,[43] as can be inferred from the fact that the aforementioned principles allow the possibility for the researcher and philosopher to enlarge and elaborate on the results already obtained. The hitherto solved puzzles of the opening passage from the proemium gave us a wider perspective on the whole problem, in so far as it turned out that Isocrates himself was eagerly striving to draw a strong parallel between his own 'philosophy' and that of Socrates and Plato while exerting himself to the utmost to conceal this ambitious undertaking.

We are dealing here with a parallelism with far-reaching implications and yet shrouded in a veil of mystery, as evidenced by the fact that Isocrates only vaguely implied his ambition to follow in Plato's footsteps by shaping one of his first discourses, the *Encomium of Helen*, to assume characteristics of a manifesto of his 'philosophy,' essentially based on the new myth, just as is the case with the

[39]265d: εἰς μίαν τε ἰδέαν συνορῶντα ἄγειν τὰ πολλαχῇ διεσπαρμένα, ἵνα ἕκαστον ὁριζόμενος δῆλον ποιῇ περὶ οὗ ἂν ἀεὶ διδάσκειν ἐθέλῃ.

[40]265e: τὸ πάλιν κατ᾽ εἴδη δύνασθαι διατέμνειν κατ᾽ ἄρθρα ᾗ πέφυκεν. Reale (2000, 235 n. 184) speaks of "dimmensione enologica" and "struttura bipolare uno-molti."

[41]The initial definition of the Sophistic in the *Sophist* (223b) can serve as an example of this.

[42]It is worthy of note that in Diogenes Laertius (II 20) Socrates and his pupil Aeschines are referred to as "the first to teach rhetoric" (i.e. a true-born art of it).

[43]Heavily relying on Jaeger (1944, 67), Kennedy (1958, 80) speaks of Isocrates' program of Panhellenism.

Phaedrus, Plato's first dialogue in the opinion of Diogenes Laertius.[44] The very fact that in the aforementioned dialogue Socrates explains his method of bringing together in one idea the scattered particulars and, by contrast, of dividing into many what was naturally collected into one by using the new myth such as that of the winged chariot points to the depth dimension of the aforementioned parallelism. This is further corroborated by the fact that Isocrates' encomium is essentially based on the theses on beauty, advocated by Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, as shall be shown in a subsequent study on the new myth in the *Helen*.

One might wonder where we have found a strong link between the contrast of one and many, as expressed in the *Sophist* and the *Phaedrus* (Socrates' explanation of his own method through the new myth of the winged chariot), and Isocrates' proemium. We have found it well hidden in the third thesis of the opening passage from the proemium in which it is said "that courage and wisdom and justice are identical, and that we possess none of these as natural qualities, but that there is only one sort of knowledge (*episteme*) concerned with them all," as translated by van Hook. His rendering of the thesis into English, except for being literal, appears at first sight to be so abstracted that we gain the impression that Isocrates intentionally wanted to withhold an essential detail from us by, among other things, incorrect usage of the term 'episteme.' Perhaps it would make more sense to use the chess analogy and speak of Isocrates being forced to make a move, and now we shall see the reason why.

Isocrates was faced with the challenge of having to conceal his heavy reliance on his models, which in itself forced him to employ, as a last resort, the terms of Socratic and Platonic philosophy, packed with hidden meanings. More specifically, in the proemium's third thesis Isocrates uses the term 'episteme' instead of the one perfectly fitting into the context, namely 'methodos.'[45] It is only through substitution of the former (*science*) with the latter (*methodos*) that Isocrates' third thesis gains clarity, as can be inferred from what seems to be a more accurate translation which reads as follows: "Others maintain that courage and wisdom and justice are identical, and that we possess none of these as natural qualities on account of the fact that we get knowledge about them all *by applying only one method*." At first glance, it is clear that what is involved here is the method based on the two opposite, alternating principles (*synagoge, diairesis*), and what is still lacking is the name of those who employ it, which will make the contrast in the proemium even more

[44]III 38: λόγος δὲ πρῶτον γράψαι αὐτὸν τὸν Φαῖδρον. This testimony seems precious to us, all the more so as it is very hard to ascertain the precise order of Plato's dialogues, which was the focus of a bitter debate until, so to speak, recently, despite the fact that the position of each work cannot be firmly defined in the list of Plato's dialogues due to the fact that Plato as a rule occupied himself with several dialogues simultaneously, as pointed out by Dörrie (1975, 902). Given that it is likely that Plato when writing the *Phaedrus* kept himself busy with the composition of other dialogues including those with the Sophistic as the main subject, then it is also likely that Isocrates elaborated on his encomium over long period of time, as was otherwise the case with the *Panathenaicus*. Particularly characteristic is the fact that, according to Diogenes Laertius (III 87), the beginning of the *Republic* was found several times revised and rewritten. For complete uncertainty about which of Plato's dialogues is to be put first, cf. DL III 62.

[45]It is indicative that in one of the opening passages from the *Statesman* (260e), in which the term 'episteme' and, to a lesser degree, 'techne' is predominantly used, we encounter yet another one having the same meaning, namely *methodos* translated as *Untersuchung* by Schleiermacher (1818).

visible. We have found it in the aforementioned context of the *Phaedrus* (266b–c) in which all those capable of employing the aforesaid method are regarded as gods and called dialecticians by Socrates.

Thus the sharp contrast between eristics and dialecticians, as expressed in the sophistical method represented by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus and that of Socrates respectively, was brought to light already in the opening passage from the proemium. In other words, we cannot, as is too often the case, speak of Isocrates' polemic against all spiritual currents of the period, but only of the invective against the eristics and sophists, as can be concluded from the contrasts that might be perceived only after solving enigmas in the proemium.

Ironically enough, not even these findings were sufficient for us to fully grasp the subtle play on contrasts in the opening passage from Isocrates' proemium. If the above might lead us to believe that, in an attempt to conceal his models, Isocrates was incapable of anything more highly valued than both the linear structure of his theses and the strict avoidance of every kind of accentuation, he nevertheless convinced us of the contrary by bringing the subtle nuances to his second and third thesis to such an extent that it might be said that he outdid himself. What we mean by 'subtle nuances' is a highly allusive technique applied to the second pair of the theses, consisting of the second and the third one, something that gave birth to inner contrast of crucial importance in the understanding of the encomium's final message.

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Inner Contrast in Isocrates' Theses as an Evidence of a Bitter Struggle for the Legacy of Socrates

Thus we are now in a much better position to see what Isocrates' play on contrasts looks like, in so far as the inner contrast between the second and third thesis, concerning Socrates, Plato, dialecticians and eristics, came to be added to the framing (outer) contrast between the two aforementioned pairs of theses, with one pair consisting of the first and fourth thesis (eristics, sophists), and the other of the second and the third (dialecticians, philosophers).[46]

[46]Now we encounter a problem in so far as the eristic itself is two- or, to be more precise, threefold: rhetorical, sophistical and philosophical, with an added difficulty that primary source evidence is sparse. What kind of problem we are facing can be inferred from Diogenes Laertius' assertion (II 106) that Euclides' followers were called Megarians after him, then eristics, and at a later date dialecticians, which suggests at first sight that in the time of Eubulides and Stilpo there was no distinction made between eristic and philosophy in the aforementioned school. Despite the fact that primary source evidence is sparse, the examples Diogenes Laertius gives of Stilpo's (II 116, 119) and Menedemus' eristic (II 134, 135) are quite sufficient to confirm the assumption that there are no noteworthy differences between the so-called philosophical eristic of the Megarian school and that of the exponents of the Sophistic, as pursued by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. But if we study more closely a survey of the Megarian doctrine in Diogenes Laertius, we will find out that in the aforesaid school of thought eristic was equated with dialectic, or rather philosophy, on formal grounds because the Megarians put their arguments in the form of question and answer (II 106), which in itself was reminiscent of Socratic dialogue. One possible explanation for this type of equation between eristic and philosophy may have to do with the fact we found at the very end of the survey, i.e. in the Life of Menedemus of Eretria (II 125–144), where it is asserted that, although in his doctrines he was a Platonist, yet he made sport of dialectic, which in this case, *mutatis mutandis*, means eristic. That the most famous exponent of the school, Stilpo of Megara,

Isocrates' technique of bringing the subtle nuances to his theses was motivated by his desire to launch a fierce attack upon his rivals and yet to tone down a polemic against them, and this was only possible by making covert allusions to them, otherwise based on such ones in the writings of others, as a result of which a first glance immediately gave the false impression that all intellectual currents of the period came under his criticism. As indicated above, Isocrates succeeded in achieving almost the impossible by using of allusions, i.e. to make a fierce polemic against the exponents of both the sophistical and the so-called philosophical eristic, such as Euthydemus, Dionysodorus and Eubulides of Miletus,[47] shine through the peaceful stream of his narrative, in full accordance with Philostratus' view (*VS* 564) of Herodes Atticus' oratory, which is compared to gold dust shining beneath the waters of a silvery eddying river. If we take into account what has been said so far about Isocrates' method applied to the encomium we can reasonably assume that this characteristic of his style was widely accepted in the period of the Second Sophistic, which in itself provides yet another argument supporting the assumption that he was one of its forerunners, as will be detailed below.

The same sort of fierce polemic also filters through the second thesis and its illusive tone of reconciliation, the only difference being that this time Isocrates makes allusions to Antisthenes' definitional rigorism and drags, except for Plato, none other than Aristotle into the polemic with the aim to hide behind his harsh criticism of the aforementioned rigorism characterized in the *Metaphysics* as being nothing short of utter stupidity.[48]We encounter these same irreconcilable attitudes to Antisthenes, albeit without explicit mention of his name, also in the *Sophist* (251b) where Plato dons the mask of the Eleatic Stranger who apparently alludes to Antisthenes when speaking of elderly men who take pleasure in saying that we must not call a man good but must call the good good, and a man man. When again the aforementioned stranger refers to elderly men and their poverty of intellect (251c),which makes them admire such quibbles, we can clearly see that Plato's criticism of Antisthenes is no different from that of Aristotle if we leave aside his

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also practiced eristic in the form of a joke can be inferred from the fact that Menedemus despised the teachers of the school of Plato and had a great admiration only for Stilpo (II 134). This can explain why Isocrates felt such a strong antipathy for eristic even in the form of a joke, and why an unnamed person listening to and expressing disapproval with Socrates' comical dialogue with Euthydemus and Dionysodorus in the *Euthydemus* (304d–306c) is to be identified solely as Isocrates. Most probably, the exponents of the Megarian school were exhibiting a strong tendency toward eristic in the form of a joke as an ersatz to Socratic irony, since they were incapable of applying their master's method in teaching and dialogue.

[47]Given an earlier date of the *Helen*, it seems more likely that Isocrates' criticism of eristic was directed against Eubulides since it is logical to assume that a similar situation prevailed in the time of Eubulides.

[48]Δ 29.1024b33: Αντισθένης ᾤετο εὐήθως μηθὲν ἀξιῶν λέγεσθαι πλὴν τῷ οἰκείῳ λόγῳ, ἓν ἐφ' ἑνός. It is noteworthy that Aristotle when dealing with the moral character of an orator in the third book of his *Rhetoric* (17. 1418b16) says that, since sometimes, in speaking of another, we may be accused of abuse or boorishness, we must make another speak in our place, pointing out none other than Isocrates as an example of this. Given that Aristotle had a broadly positive view of Isocrates' art of speaking, as expressed in several passages from *Rhetoric*, it is impossible to understand how he was constantly trying to besmirch Isocrates, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Isocr.* 18) put it.

tendency to conceal the names of his rivals.[49] It is this very fact, insignificant though it may seem at first glance, that points to the conclusion that Isocrates adopted the allusive technique applied to the opening passage of the proemium from Socrates and Plato and the dialogues with the sophistic as the main subject.

Thus we are now facing the phenomenon of an inner and sharp contrast between the second and the third thesis in the opening passage of Isocrates' proemium, as evidenced by the fact that in the latter he declares himself to be a follower of the analytical-synoptical method, as advocated by Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, as opposed to the former in which all his intolerance to Antisthenes was reflected no matter how hard he tried to make only a vague allusion to it.

All of this raises a big question – why is it that Isocrates resorts to a polemic against Antisthenes and yet right at the start of the proemium, if we take into account the fact that the latter had more in common with dialecticians than eristics? To explain this, there is, it seems, no other way than to assume their bitter struggle to be recognized as the true heirs to the legacy of Socrates, and the very fact that both of them had a special relationship of trust and loyalty with Socrates[50] and nurtured ambitions to set themselves up as the only true followers of his ideas points to this conclusion. And they had good reason to nurture them, as evidenced by the fact that Antisthenes is characterized as the true heir to the spirit of Socrates[51] in Xenophon's *Symposium*, which induced some scholars to conclude that not only Xenophon's view of Socrates[52] but also Socratic theology in the *Memorabilia* (1, 4; 5, 3) was adopted from Antisthenes.[53] By contrast, Isocrates could be proud of getting much praise not from Xenophon,[54] a disciple of Socrates, but from Socrates himself, who prophesied a splendid future for him in the *Phaedrus* by saying that, if he continues to occupy himself with his present studies, he should so excel in them that all who have ever treated of rhetoric shall seem less than children, compared to him. In order to explain this, Socrates pointed out that these studies will not satisfy Isocrates, but a more divine impulse will lead him to greater things due to the fact that something of philosophy is inborn in his mind (279a). This is the reason why Socrates, upon

[49]A fierce rivalry between Plato and Antisthenes could be viewed as a consequence of their ambition to create Socratic literature as a new genre, something that necessarily involved leaving their own imprint on their master's work and teachings closely related to practical ethics. On the rivalry, cf. DL III 35 and Münscher (1916) 2151. As opposed to that, Viidebaum (2021, 91) holds that "rather than criticizing his contemporary intellectuals individually (Antisthenes, Plato, Aristotle, etc.) it could be argued instead that Isocrates treats them rather as a derivative or second-order group of Socratics, thus suggesting that Isocrates' most profound opponent, and one Isocrates is most committed to challenging in his work, is Socrates."

[50]That is evidenced by the fact that Antisthenes was in a group of the most dedicated followers of Socrates, gathered around him on the last day of his life (Plat. *Phd*. 59b), as distinguished from Isocrates who, according to Pseudo-Plutarch (*X orat*. 838), conceived no little sorrow for Socrates, inasmuch that the next day he put himself in mourning, or, according to Hermias of Alexandria (*In Phaedr.* 264. 20) mourned the death of his master for a whole year.

[51]Natorp (1894, 2540).

[52]Joël (1893). Cf. Natorp (1894, 2540).

[53]Dümmler (1889, 64).

[54]According to Münscher (1916, 2151), none other than Xenophon helped Isocrates become closer acquainted with Socrates. According to Diogenes Laertius (II 55) Isocrates wrote an encomium on Gryllus, Xenophon's son.

Phaedrus' remark on Isocrates as his favourite friend (278e) replies with the warm words "my favourite Isocrates," which betray all his intellectual proximity to, and very close relationship with Isocrates.[55] Far from being prone to consider, as many others do, Socrates' words as an example of irony and ridicule,[56] we are of the view that what is involved here is the philosopher's genuine and sincere attitude which most likely pleased Isocrates, so much so that in full accordance with the aforesaid prophesy he called his own rhetoric philosophy[57] and used the term as a means to disassociate himself from the sophistical rhetoric of his own age.[58]

The rivalry between Isocrates and Antisthenes came from their personal development paths that form a perfect parallel, as evidenced by the fact that both of them were disciples of the sophists Protagoras,[59] Gorgias[60] and Prodicus[61] (with Hippias[62] featuring only on

[55]Socrates' critical attitudes at the close of the *Euthydemus* (304d–306c) towards an unnamed orator who can be, as he put it, described as the border-ground between philosopher and politician should be understood rather as a correction of his prophesy in the *Phaedrus* than a polemic against Isocrates due to the fact that the second part of his prophesy did not come true, as a result of which Isocrates, instead of becoming a true philosopher, remained staying in the border-ground between philosopher and politician. Socrates' final assertion that, except for being indulgent towards such an ambition, we should be glad of anyone, whoever he may be, who says anything that verges on good sense, and labours steadily and manfully in his pursuit, serves as proof of this (306c). On friendship between Plato and Isocrates, cf. DL III 8.

[56]Cf. Raeder (1905, 276), Geel (1838, 11), Münscher (1916, 2151 and Norlin (1928) xviii ("half-playful words of Socrates in the *Phaedrus*"). It is noteworthy that this view on the issue does not agree with what we read in Cicero's (*Orat.* 42) where Socrates' prophesy is regarded as a genuine and sincere attitude to the genius and the promise of Isocrates.

[57]Blass (1892, 28) saw it as Isocrates' unbelievable arrogance and thus came to the wrong conclusion that this is one of the main reasons why Plato alienated himself from the orator and eventually became his opponent.

[58]To tell the truth, Isocrates in all likelihood felt compelled to use the term 'philosophy' to describe not only a sophistical practice of teaching (*C. soph*. 11) but also Polycrates' rhetoric (*Bus.* 1), so as to avoid the danger of seeming to be both arrogant and pretentious in the eyes of his contemporaries when describing his own rhetoric as a philosophy and that of his rivals as a common type of sophistry. But, despite all this, Isocrates does make a clear distinction between his 'philosophy' and that of others in his self-interpretation in the *Antidosis* (209-211) by referring to the former as *melete*, *epimeleiai, philoponiai,* or, in other words, gymnastics of the mind (*phroneseos askesis*) in sheer contrast to the latter characterized as *teratologiai*, i.e. mental juggling, with *epimeleia* being along with *sophia* the keyword of both Plato's *Alcibiades* and Xenophon's *Memorabilia,* in the latter of which *sophia* was equated with *enkrateia*, something that points to the possibility that these keywords were borrowed from Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades* (123c–124b). The very fact that in Plutarch (*Aud. poet.* 43f; 48d) we find similar characterization of what was described by Isocrates as 'philosophy' of his rivals*,* with followers of such a sophistic being equated with popular lecturers or superficial persons bent on acquiring mere information, allows us to conclude that what Isocrates had in mind was just this kind of knowledge.

[59]Article by Suidas provides highly unusual piece of information about Isocrates heavily relying on both Protagoras and Gorgias for preparing and delivering his speeches. Diogenes Laertius (IX 53) provides us, too, with details about Protagoras' influence on Antisthenes. Cf. Natorp (1894) 2539.

[60]Quint. *Inst*. 3.1.18, Cic. *Sen*. 13. For Gorgias' influence on Antisthenes, cf. Natorp (1894, 2539) and Montanari (2022, 366) who, unlike the former, regards the evidence of Antisthenes' training in the school of Gorgias as controversial.

[61]Cf. Münscher (1916) 2152 and Natorp (1894) 2539.

[62]Cf. Natorp (1894) 2539.

the list of Antisthenes' masters), only to give up this legacy, turn to Socrates[63] and view their mission almost exclusively as a popularization of his ethical teachings, with Isocrates proving to be much more successful,[64] as can be concluded from the fact that, according to Blass (1892, 41), Dionysius of Halicarnassus essentially based his ethical ideas on Isocrates' popularization teachings and thus exerted a decisive influence for centuries to come.

It is hardly possible to imagine the course of the aforementioned bitter fight for the legacy of Socrates without interference by Plato, who might be irritated by Antisthenes' daring ambition to write Socratic dialogues,[65] all the more so since by doing so the latter entered his, so to speak, forbidden ground. As it seems, that is the main reason why Plato came out against him in a number of his dialogues, with some of them (*Theaetetus, Euthydemus, Cratylus, Lesser* and *Greater Hippias*) written with the express intent of refuting his teachings.[66] In other words, Plato and Antisthenes engaged in a polemic and kept it going, as opposed to Isocrates who only wished to join in as an interested observer, all the more so since he himself was concerned and his task was made so much easier by the fact that Plato set the tone for the controversy, as a result of which Isocrates saw no better alternative than to align himself with him by using his most effective weapon – refined allusive technique.

One of the beauties of the opening passage from the proemium is reflected in the fact that we revealed in it yet another parallel which is even more heavy with meaning than the one previously discussed. What we are referring to here is the fact that in one of his early works, *Encomium of Helen*,[67] Isocrates wanted to pay off a debt of gratitude owed to Socrates for the prophesy foreseeing his excellence in rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*, one of Plato's early dialogues, representing a specific manifesto of his philosophy[68] in the same sense as the encomium, Isocrates' early

[63]Cf. Dindorf (1852) 254, 2. See also DL VI 2, where Antisthenes is referred to as Socratic, as is otherwise the case in Xenophon (*Mem.* 3.11.17, *Symp.* 4.43–4.84). For Socrates' influence on Isocrates, cf. also Münscher (1916) 2152.

[64]It seems that due to his crass behavior Antisthenes, unlike Isocrates, had only a few pupils (DL VI 4; Ael. *VH* 10.16), which is at variance with the laudatory view of him held by both Theopompus (DL VI 14) and Xenophon (*Symp*. 4.61). See also DL VI 15 and Natorp (1894) 2539.

[65]Cf. DL II 64 with reference to *Socratic Dialogues* as Antisthenes' work. In this connection, we should mention Wilcox (1943, 113) and his assertion that 'logoi' and 'antilogikoi' in Isocrates' lists of 'kinds of prose' in the *Antidosis* (45) and the *Panathenaicus* (1–2) are nothing other than the Socratic dialogues. In marked contrast to him, Too (2008, 119–120) regards it as a reference to sophistic works." See also Viidebaum (2021) 73.

[66]Cf. Natorp (1894) 2540. See also DL II 47: "of all those who succeeded Socrates and were called Socratics the chief were Plato, Xenophon, Antisthenes." According to Gigon (1992, 412), of all the disciples of Socrates only Plato and Aeschines "haben diese Fiktion in der Art des Dramas durchgeführt: man sieht Sokrates und seine Freunde unmittelbar agieren, ohne daß der Verfasser selbst überhaupt in Erscheinung träte," as opposed to Xenophon and other Socratics who join in the dialogue from the outset and "den Dialog ausdrücklich als eine Erinnerung an Selbsterlebtes berichten."

[67]According to Blass (1892, 25), the work seems to have been written almost immediately after the period of Isocrates' activity as a logographer. Although the date of the encomium is generally put about 370 B.C., we agree with Mathieu-Brémond (1956, 160) and Lesky (1971, 632) who would give an earlier date. See also Jebb (1893, 96–103) and Blass (1892) 242.

[68]Cf. Reale (2000, 5) and Viidebaum (2021, 69) who uses almost the same expression for Isocrates' encomium. Similarly, Blass (1892, 28) speaks of "Antrittsprogramm von Platons Lehrthätigkeit in der Akademie."

work, can be viewed as a specific programme of his own 'philosophy.' That same 'philosophy' was regarded by Dionysius of Halicarnassus as a popularization of Socratic and Platonic ethics for centuries to come as far as all those are concerned who lacked the ability to brood over the aforementioned philosophers' train of thought and follow it out into all relevant details and ramifications (Blass 1892,41). Thus, Isocrates has already indicated his intention to bring his own views on literature into conformity with Socrates or, rather, Plato's criticism of literary creativity and, above all, poetry, as expressed in the third book of the *Republic*, with one extremely important and yet in previous research on the subject overlooked detail in the main body of the encomium supporting this assumption.[69]

But we will be in a better position to fully understand the importance of Isocrates' bringing his own views on literary theory into conformity with Plato's attitudes towards literary creativity for trends and tendencies in the centuries to come only if we slightly modify the contrasting notions of the eristics and dialecticians, emerging in the opening passage from the proemium by using their respective generic terms. Thus the modification made a nicely contrasting pair of *rhetoric* and *philosophy*, as evidenced by the fact that the so-called sophistical eristic is indissolubly linked to rhetoric, as opposed to dialectic, inextricably connected with philosophy and moreover used by Socrates in the *Phaedrus* (266b) as a method for basing the new rhetoric on philosophy, and this is yet another reason why Isocrates identified his own rhetoric with philosophy.[70]

Thus the proemium to the *Helen* provides us with the chief evidence for a bitter struggle between philosophy and rhetoric for the primacy in the education of the youth, a struggle on which von Arnim (1898, 4–114) spent a whole chapter of his extensive monograph and yet lost sight of the fact that Isocrates' proemium contains essential details that could help us gain a better understanding of the aforementioned bitter feud. So it was inevitable for him to get the wrong impression about rhetoric and, by the same token, the ancient sophistic winning an overwhelming victory over philosophy[71] and thus achieving undisputed dominance of the latter in the period of the Second Sophistic. But a major problem with this conclusion is that it won almost general acceptance among the scholars,[72]which has caused research on both

[69]What Isocrates used as a starting point for writing his encomium was Socrates' assertion in the aforementioned poetological book of the *Republic* (391c–d) that he and his interlocutor Adeimantus will not believe nor suffer it to be said that Theseus and Peirithous attempted such dreadful rapes.

[70]Leaving aside Socrates' characterization of his own philosophy as a noble and true-born art of sophistry (cf. n. 29), what Isocrates meant by calling himself sophist can also be inferred from two instances of the use of the verb *sophisteuo* in the sense of *teaching the subject-matter of philosophy* in Diogenes Laertius' account of the lives of Aeschines the Socratic (II 62) and Timon of Phlius (IX 110). In this connection, it should be noted that Brancacci (1985) coined the term *rhetorike philosophousa* to describe accurately this type of rhetoric.

[71]In an attempt to prove his thesis, von Arnim (1898, 77–84) points to the fact that an almost parallel turning to rhetoric occurred in both the Peripatos and the Academy when headed in the third century B.C. by Lyco and Arcesilaus respectively. He overlooked details regarding the total victory won by philosophy over rhetoric in the age of Carneades whose predominance in philosophy was such that even the rhetoricians would dismiss their classes and repair to him to hear him lecture (DL IV 62).

[72] What is meant here are studies by Rohde (1915), Norden (1915), Boulanger (1925), Graindor (1930), Kroll (1940), Gerth (1956), Bompaire (1958) and Reardon (1971). Cf. opposing viewpoints as expressed in our studies "ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΗΣΑΝΤΕΣ ΕΝ ΔΟΞΗΙ ΤΟΥ ΣΟΦΙΣΤΕΥΣΑΙ: An Enigmatic

Isocrates and the new sophistic to be caught ever since in a vicious circle, as evidenced by the fact that in one of the model monographs in our field of study Isocrates is referred to as an "organizer of the spirit of the ancient sophistic."[73]

The Rest of the Proemium (4–15): Isocrates' Self-Interpretation and the Sorry Debacle of the Ancient Sophistic

In the remaining part of the proemium, we continue to encounter the same play on contrasts as in the opening passage, the only difference being that the play is now transferred to the personal level of the author and his mission at a turbulent time, something that helps us to completely solve the puzzles appearing at the beginning of the exordium. Heavily influenced by the *Sophist* and yet unpromising at first glance, the second passage from the proemium turned out to be unexpectedly laden with symbolism. In order to understand the aforementioned symbolism, we must carefully examine a conversation Socrates holds with the Eleatic Stranger in the work just mentioned as well as the main topic around which their discussion revolves and the dialogue's beginning and end. The conversation essentially starts with Socrates' question addressed to the Eleatic Stranger as to whether people in his country consider the names 'sophist,' 'statesman,' 'philosopher' to be one, or two, or, as there are three terms, three, dividing them into three classes, whereupon Stranger replies that they consider them three (217b), something that served as a prelude to the main topic of the dialogue such as a precise definition of the name 'sophist,' one of which was an outright condemnation of the Sophistic, verging on mockery (223b: ἡ τέχνης θηρευτικῆς, ζῳοθηρίας, πεζοθηρίας, χερσαίας, ἡμεροθηρικῆς, ἀνθρωποθηρίας). The aforementioned definition aside, Isocrates seems to have been highly impressed by the dialogues' implicit message saying that only a philosopher can be a true statesman, as a result of which he could not help but call his own rhetoric philosophy, all the more so since he himself was driven by a desire to play the role of statesman. When, on the comparatively rare occasions, Isocrates labels his rhetoric as Sophistic he seems to have taken example from Socrates' identifying his own philosophy with a noble and true-born art of sophistry in the famous passage from the *Sophist* (231b: *genei gennaia sophistike*).[74]

As Isocrates was very well aware that he was incapable of making the second part of Socrates' prophesy in the *Phaedrus* (279a) come true, and since he was very eager to combine in his political course of action the ideal of a statesman with that

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Depiction of the Second Sophistic in Philostratus and Eunapius' Lives of the Sophists or What is Indeed the Mentioned Sophistic?", *AJPH* 2022, 1(1), 51–70, "Philosophical plasma in Dio Chrysostom's Fourth Discourse on Kingship and Socrates' Political Testament in Alcibiades, *AJHA* 2024, 11 (2), 119–154, "Symbols, Enigmas, Political Allusions and the Legend of Socrates in Dio Chrysostom's Olympic Discourse," *AJHA* 2025, 12 (1), 53–84, "Rohde's Theory of Relationship between the Novel and Rhetoric and the Problem of Evaluating the Entire Post-Classical Greek Literature," *AJHA* 2023, 10 (3), 193–220 as well as in the study by Brancacci (1985).

[73]Schmid– Stählin (1940) 214.

[74]This can explain why Socrates was referred to as the sophist par excellence in Aeschines' discourse *Against Timarchus* (173), something that leaves open the possibility that Isocrates when calling himself sophist used the term in the sense of being Socrates' follower.

of philosopher, he was compelled to seek a middle way between philosophy and rhetoric, which consisted in the fact that he elaborated on the key principles of Socratic and Platonic philosophy so as to adapt them to the spirit of the time, i.e. that of popularization, in full accordance with Socrates' view of his overall skills, as expressed at the close of the *Euthydemus* (304d–306c). It is precisely this that Isocrates admitted openly in the proemium by saying that it is difficult to reach the heights of greatness of the others (13: τῶν δὲ χαλεπὸν τοῦ μεγέθους ἐφικέσθαι), i.e. of his own models, as a result of which he was left with no alternative other than to instruct his fellow citizens, including his own pupils, in the practical affairs of the government (4: περὶ τὰς πράξεις ἐν αἷς πολιτευόμεθα, τοὺς συνόντας παιδεύειν).[75] When this practical discipline was shortly thereafter characterized as *ton politikon episteme* (9) and its subject that of the greatest moral value (12), we can fully comprehend the reasons why he had a strong dislike for the exponents of the ancient sophistic and eristic who, in his view, care nothing at all for either private or public affairs and "take most pleasure in those discourses which are of no practical service in any particular."[76]

But what is more important is that in the same context we find historical evidence of inestimable value about the decline and the sorry debacle of the ancient sophistic. The aforementioned debacle occurred almost immediately after the brief period of its glory or, to be more precise, in the following generation of the sophists, as can be inferred from the fact that the captious and useless themes handled by the sophists of the previous generation are, to Isocrates' utter amazement, still being recycled in his own time despite the fact that the new treatment of the mentioned themes is, in his view, far less elaborate and overwrought than that in the compositions of Protagoras, Gorgias and other unnamed exponents of the movement (2).

The far-reaching significance of this evidence becomes fully apparent only if placed in relation to the evidence found in Dio's 54th discourse, i.e. his short essay on Socrates dealing with those sophists who won such admiration and their works that have already perished in his own time despite having been carefully written down and edited so that nothing remained but their name alone.[77]How much and to what extant the aforementioned authentic testimonies to the sorry debacle of the ancient sophistic complement each other can be inferred from the fact that both authors emphasize the close relationship between the decadence of the movement and its exponents' express intent to make money,[78] having a direct, pernicious effect

[75]Heilbrunn (1977, 159) sees this as an instance of Protagorean influence on Isocrates. Quite to the contrary, what is involved here is an echo of the legend of Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (2.7.1). See below n. 76.

[76]*Hel*. 6: τούτοις μάλιστα χαίρουσι τῶν λόγων οἱ μηδὲν πρὸς ἓν χρήσιμοι τυγχάνουσιν ὄντες. This can be regarded as an echo of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* in which Socrates is represented as an expert in almost all practical disciplines such as military art (3.1–5), home economics (2.7–8), housekeeping (2. 9–10), doing sustainable business and account-keeping (2.8), with his solidarity with all the members of the community 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). According to Dörrie (1975, 895), Plato's philosophy was practically oriented as well.

[77]*Or.* 54.4. Cf. the same evidence in Aelian (*VH* 1.23) where Gorgias and Protagoras are regarded as being as far short of others in wisdom as boys are of men.

[78]*Or.* 54.1: χρήματα πορίζειν. Cf. *Hel.* 6: οὐδενὸς αὐτοῖς ἄλλου μέλει πλὴν τοῦ χρηματίζεσθαι παρὰ τῶν νεωτέρων.

on a very large number of their orations devoid, as Dio put it, of the slightest sense, with Isocrates (*Hel*. 8) shedding further light on the decline by accusing the sophists of mendacity they caused to increase to such a degree that it pervades all of society.

It is this key word 'mendacity'[79] that indicates the true nature of Isocrates art of speaking, in so far as he wanted to dissociate himself from the sophistic legacy at all costs by speaking the truth, and the only way to achieve this was to essentially base his oeuvre on the principles of one methodologically and ethically founded philosophy such as that of Socrates and Plato.[80] As regards methodology, Isocrates went so far as to disapprove of all the other spiritual currents, with the exception of the philosophy of Aristotle.

This manifesto of Isocrates also had a literary dimension, otherwise closely connected with a state building one, as can be inferred from the contrasting pairs in the proemium such as useless things – the useful ones (5: *achresta – chresima*), trivial themes – famous subjects (13: *mikra – chalepa* i.e μέγεθος ἔχοντα), false statements– truth (4: *pseudes logos – aletheia*), buffoonery – dignity (11: *skoptein – semnynesthai*) and levity – seriousness (11: *paizein –-spoudazein*), with the first terms in the pairs relating to eristic and sophistic rhetoric, and the last pair having particular significance for Isocrates' poetics. By this we mean that Isocrates was incapable of creatively discovering ways in which to elaborate on the concepts of Socrates and Plato's philosophy just as he was unable to fully adopt the basic characteristic of Socratic style such as the mixture of the serious and the laughable, made manifest in none other of Plato's dialogues than the *Phaedrus*, where Socrates while talking about the lofty subject matter, as expressed through the myth of the winged chariot, is at the same time poking fun at Phaedrus of Myrrhinus as if he were a small, snotty child.[81]

Thus Isocrates was yet again compelled to seek a middle way which, as we have already seen, consisted in the amalgamation, or rather *montage* of literary-philosophical patterns,[82] most often barely recognizable, as was the case with the opening passage from the proemium. Even more important is the fact that this method won almost general acceptance in the period of the Second Sophistic, as can be inferred from its reflection in both Philostratus and Lucian's oeuvre, which in

[79]*Periergia* (*Hel*. 2) in the sense of *unnecessary work, futile affectation*, as expressed in the praise of bumble-bees (12), salt (12), misfortune (10) and the life of beggars and exiles (8), assumes, along with mendacity, characteristics of a key word in Isocrates' confrontation with the legacy of the ancient sophistic.

[80]What is being referred to here are *diairesis* and *synagoge* or the two opposite, alternating principles of the same method. It can rightly be said that the aforementioned method is Isocrates' *techne* which ancient scholarship attributed to the orator, with Walker (2011, 90) trying to prove its existence and Roochnik (1996, 288) challenging his assumptions by arguing that Isocrates, instead of the strict handbook approach, offered a kind of teachable knowledge that makes none of the hard and fast claims of a *techne*. Cf. also Viidebaum (2021) 87–89.

[81]*Dom.* 4: κἀνταῦθα καθεζόμενος Φαίδρου τοῦ Μυρρινουσίου κατειρωνεύετο. Norden (1915, 109) overlooked this reference when asserting that of all the ancient theoreticians of style only Aristotle (*Rh*. 3 7.1408b11) noticed an ironic note in Socrates, or rather Plato's dithyrambic diction in the *Phaedrus.* For the widespread ideal of the mixture of the serious and the laughable in Medieval European Literature, see Curtius (1961) 419–434.

[82] Perhaps we are dealing here with what Isocrates called the secrets of his art, with none other than Speusippus being the first to divulge them, according to Diogenes Laertius (IV 2).

itself is yet another indication that Isocrates may rightly be regarded as a forerunner of the new sophistic.

Sheer Inventiveness in Literature (*kainotes*) like a Freak: Reflections of Isocrates' Method in the Second Sophistic

What is being referred to here is *kainotes* (*Hel.* 2: τούτους ἐπὶ τῇ καινότητι τῶν εὑρημένων φιλοτιμουμένους), which in the proemium assumes characteristics of a generic term encompassing all the above characteristics of the topics addressed by the exponents of the ancient sophistic: *achresta* (useless things), *mikra* (trivial themes), *pseudes logos* (false statements), *skoptein* (buffoonery) and *paizein* (levity). All this becomes all the more important when we take into account the fact that the same term is used by Lucian in his short essay of programmatic character, *Prometheus es in verbis* (*To One who Said "You're a Prometheus in Words*), to describe a method diametrically opposed to his own, i.e. *montage*, which, unlike the former characterized as a pure invention (3: *kainotes*, *kainopoein*, *kainourgon*), is essentially based on older models,[83] or rather archetype.[84]

Lucian, as was otherwise the case with Isocrates, had a deep-rooted aversion to the method of inventiveness, which caused him to represent it in a grotesque way either as a completely black Bactrian camel or a man of two colours, half jet-black and half dazzlingly white, the colours equally divided, or in other words as a freak (*Prom.verb.* 4).

Far from being satisfied with painting these grotesque images, Lucian felt the need to represent the method of invention even in the form of a symbol (*Prom. verb*. 3), which in itself becomes all the more important as aesthetic criteria of great significance for the Second Sophistic are inherently associated with the symbol itself, namely criteria established by Socrates and applied by Isocrates himself (cf. n. 83). What is being referred to here are Prometheus' human figures made of clay and becoming living creatures as soon as Athena breathes into the mud and thus makes the clay models live, which means that the life span of the aforementioned method fully corresponds to that of men, something that was confirmed by the evidence in Isocrates' encomium about the sorry debacle of the ancient sophistic,

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[83]*Prom. verb.* 3: *archaioteron ti tou plasmatos.* Under the influence of the emblematic concept in the *Ion* (534a–b), the method of *montage* is visualized by Lucian in both the *Piscator* (*The Dead Come to Life or the Fisherman*) 6 and the *Imagines* (6–7), in the latter of which painting with words the portrait of Panthia is represented as if the greatest names of fine and plastic arts shared the task of portraying with each other and consequently shaped that part of her figure in the elaboration of which they were thought to be peerless, in full accordance with Socrates' theses on fine arts, put forward in his conversations with Parrhasius the painter and Cleito the sculptor in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (3. 10. 1–5; 3. 10.6–15).

[84]*Prom. verb.* 3: πρός τι ἄλλο ἀρχέτυπον μεμιμημένον. Cf. Diogenes Laertius (III 13), where Plato is quoted as saying that ideas "stand in nature like archetypes (*paradeigmata*), and that all things else bear a resemblence to the ideas because they are copies of these archetypes," as translated by Hicks (LCL). This can explain the appearance of the conceptual couple "archetypa and paradeigmata," describing the essence of Lucian's art in *Pro imaginibus* (*Essays in Portraiture Defended*),10, the sequel to the *Imagines*. Thus Lucian's *archetypa* and *paradeigmata* turned out to be nothing other than an allusion to the method of the new rhetoric in the *Phaedrus.*

the life span of which has turned out to be identical to that of humans. It can with good reason be said that by using of the symbol Lucian makes indirect reference to *montage,* or rather amalgamation, as his own method capable, unlike originality, of bestowing immortality upon the author, i.e. of guaranteeing him life in eternity instead of a life limited in time. This explains his unwavering assertion (*Prom. verb*. 4) that he would be so ashamed of his work if it were based solely on invention and thus proved to be graceless that he would surely trample it under foot and destroy it once for all.

In line with what has been said so far about Isocrates' self-interpretation, it will come as no surprise to learn that his poetics-related attitudes are reflected in yet another landmark work of the Second Sophistic, Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*. What is being referred to here is one of the central passages from the proemium, in which Isocrates, by way of comparison, points to his own 'philosophical' method by saying that "to be a little superior in important things," or rather topics, "is of greater worth than to be pre-eminent in petty things that are without value for living" (5: πολὺ κρεῖττον περὶ τῶν χρησίμων ἐπιεικῶς δοξάζειν ἢ περὶ τῶν ἀχρήστων ἀκριβῶς ἐπίστασθαι). The opening passage from Philostratus' *Lives* (480)*,* dealing with the philosophical nature of the ancient sophistic, faithfully reflects these attitudes of Isocrates, as can be inferred from the fact that the exponents of the aforementioned spiritual current discussed the themes that philosophers treat of, the only difference being that the latter, by their method of questioning, set snares for knowledge, and advance step by step as they confirm the minor points of their investigations, but assert that they have still no sure knowledge of that whereof they speak, which is a clear allusion to the Socratic method. As opposed to them, the sophists of the old school assume a knowledge of that whereof they speak and introduce their speeches with such phrases as "I know," or "I am aware," or "I have long observed,"[85] which in itself points to the conclusion that Philostratus essentially based his view of the sophistical method on the particularly characteristic passage from the *Euthydemus*,[86] a dialogue that, as we have already seen, also served as a model for Isocrates in his confrontation with the Sophistic.

These concordances between Isocrates and the two major exponents of the Second Sophistic pointed of themselves to the importance the authors of the Second Sophistic attached to his methodological and poetological principles, but not to their strategic significance, otherwise not easy to see since the author displays a marked propensity to communicate the basic principles of his poetics by way of enigma or barely noticeable allusion. That his methodological principles have a strategic

[85]It is logical to assume that the wording ἐκεῖνοι τὰς ἐρωτήσεις ὑποκαθήμενοι καὶ τὰ σμικρὰ τῶν ζητουμένων προβιβάζοντες οὔπω φασὶ γιγνώσκειν (*VS* 480) implies Socrates and his method, as opposed to the phrasing προοίμια γοῦν ποιεῖται τῶν λόγωντὸ 'οἶδα' καὶ τὸ 'γιγνώσκω' καὶ 'πάλαι διέσκεμμαι,' which might point, except for the prophecies by the Pythia, to Homer and his knowledge of all the possible worlds.

[86]294b: ἢ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, τοὺς ἀστέρας ὁπόσοι εἰσί, καὶ τὴν ἄμμον ἐπίστασθον. Cf. Philostratus (*VS* 481): καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ τοῦ Πυθίου ἐστὶν ἀκούειν οἶδα δ᾽ ἐγω ψάμμου τ᾽ ἀριθμὸν καὶ μέτρα θαλάσσης. It should be noted that Philostratus employed ideas from the *Euthydemus* to praise the ancient sophistic, as opposed to Isocrates who used them to criticize it. This difference can be explained by the fact that Philostratus admits the parallel existence of two types of the ancient sophistic, one poetical and another historical (i.e. Socratic), with the former being essentially equivalent to the Homeric poetry.

significance was already announced in the second passage from the proemium, namely in his polemic against both the exponents of the ancient sophistic and the two disciples of Parmenides, Zeno and Melissus, whose method is characterized as a claptrap (*terthreia*) due to the discrepancy between their words and their deeds (*Hel*. 4: *en tois logois … en tois ergois*), having as a consequence a lack of tangible results. All of this points to both Alcibiades' discourse in Plato's *Symposium* (215b) and the early dialogue *Laches*, in which Socrates is characterized (implicitly in the former, explicitly in the latter) as an ideal musician precisely because he "tuned himself with the fairest harmony" by making "a true concord of his own life between his words and his deeds."[87]

That Isocrates' poetics and his political course of action were of major strategic significance to the exponents of the Second Sophistic canbe inferred from the fact that his main thesis on the need to make a true concord of one's own life between one's own words and deeds, put forward in his polemic in the proemium against the sophists, eristics and Eleatics, is reflected not only in Philostratus' work mentioned above[88] but also in that of the two major exponents of the Second Sophistic in its early and late phase, Aelius Aristides and Chrysanthius,[89] respectively.

How popular this ideal of making a true concord of one's own life between one's own words and deeds was in the period of the Second Sophistic can be inferred from its radicalization, or rather militarization in Aristides' *Reply to Plato: In Defense of Oratory* (*Or*. 2.299),[90] in which *rhetorica militans* is advocated in full accordance with Xenophon's practical application of the aforementioned ideal,[91] which can

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[87]*Lach.* 188d: μουσικὸς ἁρμονίαν καλλίστην ἡρμοσμένος τῷ ὄντι ζῆν αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ τὸν βίον σύμφωνον τοῖς λόγοις πρὸς τὰ ἔργα. That Isocrates embraced this Socratic ideal can be inferred from his understanding of philosophy as a broad intellectual activity primarily undertaken for practical purposes as well as from his heavy dependence upon the theses on close relationship between theoretical interpratation and practical application of philosophy, as advocated by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. Cf. n. 76.

[88]*VS* 502 (Critias' failure to make a true concord of his own life between his words and his deeds). In his Life of Antiphon of Rhamnus we encounter, as was otherwise the case with Isocrates' proemium to the *Helen*, even censure of the sophistic-based forensic oratory, evidently inspired by Socrates' attitudes towards the same phenomenon in the *Gorgias* (*VS* 499: ῥητορικὴν δὲ ἐπαινοῦσι μὲν, ὑποπτεύουσι δὲ ὡς πανοῦργον καὶ φιλοχρήματον καὶ κατὰ τοῦ δικαίου ξυγκειμένην). Philostratus' closing remark that rhetoric of such a type fully deserves to be (scil. instead of Socrates) a theme that Comedy makes fun of speaks volumes about his attitudes towards oratory and the importance of the legend of Socrates for the emergence of the Second Sophistic as a vibrant intellectual movement.

[89]Cf. Eunap. *VS* 501, in which it is said that "in him the Platonic Socrates had come to life again," as evident from the fact that "in his ambition to imitate Socrates he carefully formed himself from boyhood on his pattern," as translated by W. C. Wright (LCL). In the same context magical powers are ascribed to Chrysanthius' art of speech in so far as it, like the most charming and sweetest song, caresses not only the ears of the listeners, but also, thanks to its lovely rhythms, insinuates itself into all men's ears in full accordance with the key principle of the new rhetoric, as advocated for by Socrates in the *Phaedrus* (273e). For the influence of the *Phaedrus* on the Second Sophistic, see Trapp (1990) 141.

[90]Aristides divides Socrates' legacy into early and late, theoretical and practical, so as to be in a position to uphold the view that "secure evidence of Socrates' views comes not from what he said later, when he thought the time had now come to end his life, but from what he manifestly did when he had the power to prevent the things or not," as translated by M. Trapp (LCL).

[91]*A Reply to Plato: In Defense of Oratory* (*or*. 2), 301: τὸ μὲν τοῖς ὅπλοις ἀμύνεσθαι τοῖς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις βεβιωκόσι τῶν προσηκόντων ἐστίν, τὸ δὲ αὐτοῖς τοῖς λόγοις ἀμύνεσθαι ἐν ἀλογίᾳ

make us aware of how important the role played by this and other ideals of Socrates was in the emergence of the new sophistic as an intellectual current and how strong the aversion was that the major exponents of the movement secretly felt to Roman imperial rule,[92] namely exponents that were left with no alternative other than to faithfully adhere to the key principles of Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades* such as *sophia* and *epimeleia*,[93] on which Isocrates' literary creativity and his political course of action were essentially based, as can be inferred from his self-interpretation in the *Antidosis*.[94]

Conclusion

Close analysis of the text has shown the unity of the *Encomium of Helen*, as evidenced by the fact that its proemium revealed itself to be of major strategic significance not only for gaining a better understanding of the encomium's key message but also for decoding Isocrates' poetics and unravelling the secrets of his allusive technique, the major one being that his polemic in the encomium was not, as previously thought, launched against all the spiritual currents of his time, but only against the Sophistic, eristic and Antisthenes, his rival in a bitter struggle for the legacy of Socrates. The proemium' strategic significance is also revealed in the fact that it throws further light on Isocrates' method of *montage* essentially based on the Socratic and Platonic concepts, which in itself suggests the assumption that he should be viewed as the forerunner of the Second Sophistic instead of being regarded as "the organizer of the spirit of the ancient sophistic," as claimed by some prominent researchers.

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θετέον; At the very beginning of Eunapius' *Lives* (453) Xenophon is presented as unique among all philosophers because he, like Socrates himself, adorned philosophy not only with words but with deeds. We encounter the same ideal in Isocrates' *Evagoras* (47), where the author, in full accordance with Socrates political testament in the *Alcibiades*, maintains that "a war of all Greeks against barbarians is a sacred duty because he believes that civilization in order to survive must be a militant force," as Norlin (1928, xxxviii) put it. This further strengthens the assumption that Xenophon and Isocrates were the first executors of the aforementioned testament. Cf. n. 58.

[92]Cf. hidden allusions to Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades* at the close of Dio Chrysostom's *Olympic Discourse* (*Or*. 12).

[93]These political ideals also had a literary dimension, as is evident from the fact that Socrates himself unreservedly recommended the ethical-political aspect of his teaching (*Alc.* 105d) to his interlocutor Alcibiades as a literary and philosophical basis of his own testament.

[94]Cf. n. 28.

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