Rohde’s Theory of Relationship Between the Novel and Rhetoric and the Problem of Evaluating the Entire Post-Classical Greek Literature

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

Introduction

In many respects, Rohde’s famous monograph Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer\(^1\) can be regarded as a classic example of what is referred to as a scientific work par excellence because, among other things, some of its key theses, such as the one on the relationship between the novel and the so-called sophistical rhetoric,\(^2\) seemed to have stood the test of time for almost a century and a half since they saw the light of day – a fact which clearly demonstrated their relevance\(^3\) for the present research. That’s one of the reasons why in the eyes of many Rohde’s theoretical construct assumed characteristics of a structure of colossal proportions, erected on solid foundations and built of earthquake resistant and

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\(^1\) The first edition appeared in 1876 with a second one ensuing in 1900; the third, with an important appendix by W. Schmid, was printed in 1914 and reprinted in 1960.

\(^2\) What is being referred to here is the third chapter entitled Die griechische Sophistik der Kaiserzeit.

\(^3\) Rohde’s theory of relationship between the novel and rhetoric was regarded by none other than Eduard Norden, Die antike Kunstprosa, von VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance (Stuttgart und Leipzig: Teubner, 1915\(^3\)), 275 as almost flawless: “Ich brauche darauf (sc. das Inhaltliche der Deklamationen) nicht näher einzugehen, da alle in Betracht kommenden Einzelheiten besonders von Rohde mit solcher Meisterschaft dargestellt und zu einem großen Bilde zusammengefaßt sind, daß ich nichts hinzufügen habe.”
explosion proof materials so as to be well-equipped for taking the full brunt of
explosion proof materials so as to be well-equipped for taking the full brunt of
shock waves\(^4\) without suffering greater damage.

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

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

The problem arose when small, “despised” details with the destructive power
of dynamite came into play, as a result of which Rohde’s theoretical construct, no
matter how reliable its starting points were, was leveled with the ground, with only
one of its cornerstones having\(^5\), as commonly accepted, remained in its place as
something to be reckoned with in future research. Before giving our due
consideration to the mentioned cornerstone, we shall, because of the complexity
inherent present in the methodological approach to the phenomenon, first
concentrate on the detail due to which Rohde’s attempt to shed light on drama and
plasma as a genre-designation\(^6\) of the Greek novel by using evidence found in the
ancient theory of narration and, above all, in the definition of its third type in both
Cicero\(^7\) and the author of Rhetorica ad Herennium\(^8\) was doomed to end in failure.

From a technical point of view Rohde got into trouble by losing sight of the
key fact that the strong evidence concerning both the origins and poetics of the
Greek novel could be found in the complicated division of the third type of
narrative as expressed in the works of the mentioned Latin authors, only if all
instances of the use of drama and plasma in the Greek novel as well as in the

\(^4\) Metaphor borrowed from Giuseppe Giangrande, “On the Origins of the Greek Romance:
\(^5\) That was not, as asserted by Giangrande in his excellent study “On the Origins of the
Greek Romance”, 125, Alexandrian love elegy.
\(^6\) Appearing for the first time in mid Byzantine period, more precisely in Photius, and
equated with the so-called fictional narrative in all the technical manuals of Late antiquity. On
other terms such as dramatikOn (dramatikón), sÚntagma dramatikOn (sýntagma dramatikón),
Tmútwtikôn dramátwn Ópoqśseij (erótikôn dramáton hypóthesis) used by Photius as the genre terms
\(^7\) Cicero, On Invention, 1, 27. It should be noted that two the remaining two types of
narration are, unlike the third one, closely associated with the forensic oratory, with the first one
being identified with setting forth the facts before a law court and the second one with the so-called
incidental narrative in a trial.
\(^8\) Anonymus, Rhetorica ad Herennium , 1, 12.
writings of the exponents of the Second Sophistic⁹ were subjected to some kind of hermeneutical analysis. Some of the essential meanings of the above-mentioned genre-designations, such as subject-matter of myth, symbol, action, aenigma, concept (concetto), metamorphic states of mind and body, every type of reversal, and especially one characterized by a happy ending could have been deciphered only in this way and thus enable us to draw the conclusion that no fewer than three types of subdivision, otherwise based on the criteria of (1) veracity of what is narrated¹⁰, (2) narrating person¹¹ and (3) the nature of ending, were completely fused to each other in the complicated division of the third type of narration, or rather narrative in the above-mentioned Latin authors – something that sheds light on the phenomenon of a happy ending in the plot of the Greek novel, a phenomenon that was regarded by Rohde as some kind of a brutal, unpoetic


¹⁰ Karl Barwick, “Die Gliederung der Narratio in der rhetorischen Theorie und ihre Bedeutung für die Geschichte des antiken Romans”, Hermes 63 (1928), 282 noticed two of them, namely subdivisions based on criteria of veracity of what is narrated [fabula = màqoj (narrative neither true nor probable), historia = fstor…a (an account of exploits actually performed), argumentum = dramatikhôn or plasmatikhôn (an account of imaginary exploits, which yet could have occurred)] and narrating person (genus in personis positum = katî prâswpa), whereas the remaining subdivision, i.e. third one, based on the criterion of ending such as a happy outcome (iucundo exitu rerum), was detected by us [“Drôma, plësma e màqoj nei romanzi di Achille Tazio e del Macrembolita e i fondamenti filosofici del genere” Classica et Christiana 11 (2016), 123 – 178], namely a subdivision in which the key elements of both the plot and poetics of the Greek novel, such as never-ending reversals of fortune (fortunae commutatione) as well as metamorphic states of mind and body such as austerity and gentleness, hope and fear (festüitas ... confecta ex animorum dissimilitudine, grauitate lenitate, spe metu), also found their reflection. Failing to observe this third type of subdivision was the reason behind the decision taken by almost all scholars to return to Rohde’s unfinished theses, which in turn led to taking a distance from his right attitude towards the theory of narration found in the mentioned works of the two Latin authors and rightly regarded by him as a fundamental starting point in every attempt aimed at deciphering both the genesis and poetics of the novel. The studies of the Greek novel thus ended up getting caught in a vicious circle, as implicitly acknowledged by both Karl Barwick, “Die Gliederung der Narratio in der rhetorischen Theorie”, Hermes 63 (1928), 287 and Carl Werner Müller, “Chariton von Aphrodisias und die Theorie des Romans in der Antike,” Antike und Abendland 22 (1976), 116.

¹¹ This type of subdivision (genus in personis positum = katî prâswpa) is also threefold depending on who narrates: the author himself (genus enarratium), characters acting on the stage (genus imitatum) or both the author and the characters (genus commune).
element,\(^\text{12}\) due to which the Greek novel, as it seemed to him, deserves to be placed at the lowest level on the scale of values, even beneath naive and puerile fairy tales.\(^\text{13}\) This can be explained by the fact that he didn’t have the slightest idea of how this type of a happy ending might also be deeply founded on Plato’s concept of happiness understood as \(e\ddot{u}daimon...a\) (\(eudaimonia\)),\(^\text{14}\) as expressed at the very end of the myth of the winged chariot in \(Phaedrus\),\(^\text{15}\) with polar opposite feelings such as \(man...a\) (sc. erotic \(mania\)) and \(swfros\ddot{u}nh\) (\(sophros\ddot{y}ne\ - continece\) continuously pulsating and being closely intertwined with each other in the soul of the lover and his beloved\(^\text{16}\) – something that in the mentioned context was regarded as a guarantee of their happy and blissful life in this world, and, on a purely methodological level, had its tangible parallel with \(man...a\) (\(mania\)) and \(l\ddot{o}goj\) (\(l\ddot{ogos}\)) woven into one harmonious and indivisible whole in Plato’s own oeuvre.\(^\text{17}\)

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

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

Lucian’s Self-Interpretation as the Implicit Poetics of All Authors of the Second Sophistic

Contrary to all expectations, the sudden appearance of subject-matter of poetry in Doxapatres’ definition of dramatikon had a higher purpose exceeding by far the one usually associated with the expressiveness of a poetic word,\(^{19}\) as can be inferred indirectly from Lucian’s three canons of both distinguished authors and exemplary works of art appearing in his dialogues De saltatione\(^{20}\), Lexiphanes\(^{21}\) and Imagines\(^{22}\), which could rightly be regarded as the three instances of self-interpretation to be applied to all the other major exponents of the Second Sophistic as well. We can fully understand the meaning of the expression subject-matter of poetry in Doxapatres’ definition only when we ascertain whether there are constants in the mentioned canons. And the results are the following: Homer

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\(^{18}\) Christian Waltz, Rhetores Graeci (Tübingen: J. G. Cottae, 1834), vol. 2, 201, 10: ... \(\alpha\varepsilon\) το\(j\) ποιητικο\(j\) \(j\)ρμ\(Ω\)ζοντα \(m\£l\)ιστα \(d\£\)μ\(\£\)μ\(\£\)αι. What is noteworthy is that in Doxapatres’ definition dramatikon has essentially the same meaning as argumentum in Roman rhetoric, namely subject-matter of poetry, which was, unfortunately, largely ignored in previous research on the subject. Cf. Charlton Lewis – Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press), s.v. argumentum as well as Thesaurus Linguae Latinae s.v. argumentum.

\(^{19}\) Cf. Lucian, Charon, or the Inspectors, 7 where Homer’s poetic word is represented as being even capable of provoking storms on the peaceful water surface of the river of the dead as soon as it is uttered by the author on the boat of Charon.

\(^{20}\) Dance, 60–61, where Homer, Hesiod and the best poets, and especially those of tragedy, are referred to as canonical. The lack of mention of Plato’s name in Lucian’s writing can be explained by the fact that it is essentially based on his doctrine of the parts of soul as expressed in the fourth book of the Republic, 439d – 440e and explicitly mentioned by the author himself (70).

\(^{21}\) 22.

\(^{22}\) Essays in Portraiture, 6, 7, 8 and 17.
and Hesiod referred to as the best poets,\textsuperscript{23} tragedy and comedy\textsuperscript{24} (as far as the latter is concerned Lucian seems to have had in mind that of Aristophanes), Plato, and Socrates as the protagonist of his dialogues. Thus, Plato’s name appears in a very indicative context, where a close relationship has been established between his work and that of the authors interested in subject-matter of poetry or, in other words, myth. This can be explained by his apparent aspiration to visualize mythical patterns when his concept essentially determined by logos cannot be developed any further, and this very conceptualization of the mythical imagery\textsuperscript{25} helps us understand why Socrates, along with Homer and Hesiod, was represented as an exemplary painter in the canon of fine and plastic arts in Imagines,\textsuperscript{26} and why so large a space in the text of the Greek novel was reserved for the descriptions of paintings and sculptures having, as will be seen later, a profound philosophical dimension.

A very close relationship has thus been established between mythical, or rather poetic image, and pictorial (sculptural) concept on one side and the Platonic idea on the other, as testified by an illustrative example from Lucian’s above-mentioned work, in which painting the portrait of Panthia – a woman of divine beauty and on top of that inspired by men’s aristocratic ideal of kalokagathia – with words was deliberately chosen to visualize, as far as the needs of rhetorical instruction are concerned, the two basic principles of the new rhetoric given in a bare outline in Phaedrus,\textsuperscript{27} such as the analytical partition of a phenomenon (diairisseij - diairesis) and synoptic reduction of the partitioned to a single idea (sunagwga… - synagogai), with both of them being slightly modified and disguised as paradeigmata (paradeigmata) and archéypa (archéypa) in

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\textsuperscript{23}It is noteworthy to point out that in the canon appearing in Lexiphanes Homer and Hesiod were not explicitly mentioned as such, as in the case of the catalogues we encounter in the Dance and Essays in Portraiture.

\textsuperscript{24}It is worthy of note that there is no mention of comedy in the canon appearing in the Dance, which can be explained by the fact that what was termed tragedia included, implicitly, comedy, all the more as the latter was Lucian’s favourite genre, otherwise characterized as “attractive, lovely comedy” in his canon in Lexiphanes.

\textsuperscript{25}It should be pointed out that giving Thucydides the status of canonical author in Lexiphanes (22) can be interpreted in the same way, since his conceptual elaboration of real, historical events may have been regarded as a kind of complement to Plato’s method applied to the polar opposite subject-matter, such as myth. We can rightly assume that, as far as literary canons are concerned, Lucian passed over in silence Herodotus’ work which seemed to be of greater importance than that of Thucydides to the men of letters in their attempt to work out literary material, as can be inferred from his writings Herodotus or Aetion and On the Syrian Goddess, the latter of which stands out from the former for a noble attempt at imitating the celebrated historian’s style. Truth be told, there is yet another exception in so far as we encounter rhetoricians presented as canonical authors in Lexiphanes (para. 22).

\textsuperscript{26}Essays in Portraiture, 17: “We shall require many models … and one, like herself (sc. Panthia), Ionic, painted and wrought by Aeschines, the friend of Socrates, and by Socrates himself, of all craftsmen the truest copyists because they painted with love”.

\textsuperscript{27}266b.
\end{flushright}
his dialogue
28 closely associated with Imagines – something that points to the fact
29 that the relationship between archetype, Platonic idea and poetic image has
30 become ever more evident in the early period of the Second Sophistic.
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This has brought us one big step closer to our goal of understanding the true
32 nature of the Second Sophistic in so far as the description of painting the portrait
33 of Panthia enabled us to see clearly what the use of the above-mentioned
34 principles (diairéseis and synagogai) in the schools of rhetoric looked like What is
35 being referred to here is the method that could best be characterized as assembling
36 or, in other words, montage, which makes it even more difficult to understand the
37 real meaning of things just due to the fact that nowadays montage itself is largely
38 identified with a wide range of purely technical and mechanical skills all too
39 craftsmenlike in nature. The paradox, then, is that in Lucian’s epoch, as opposed
40 to now, the aforesaid method was under the influence of Plato’s philosophy
41 closely linked to achieving sublime, lofty objectives in the field of art and
42 literature, as can be inferred from the fact that the author’s painting, or rather
43 assembling the portrait of Panthia with words was represented as if the greatest
44 names of fine and plastic art shared the task of portraying with each other and
45 consequently shaped that part of her figure in the elaboration of which they were
46 thought to be peerless, 30 as advocated by none other than Socrates in his
47 conversations with both Parrhasius the painter 31 and Cleiton the sculptor 32 in
48 Xenophon’s Memoirs of Socrates, which can rightly be regarded as the legend of
49 Socrates launched almost immediately after his death with the aim of putting the
50 key terms of his political testament in Alcibiades 33 into practice as far as the
51 literary activity is concerned. It’s a strange paradox that the products of this
52 seemingly immortal art sprung from montage are, far from being dead and lifeless,
53 truly immortal, in so far as their life in eternity is guaranteed by nothing else than
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28 Essays in Portraiture Defended, 10.
29 Essays in Portraiture, 15.
30 Essays in Portraiture, 6 – 7.
31 Xenophon, Memorabilia, 3, 10, 1 – 5.
32 Xenophon, Memorabilia, 3, 10, 6 – 15.
33 123d–e. What we are referring to are sophia and epiméleia (wisdom and industry) as
34 concepts initially having political dimension, concepts which will be later on, due to Xenophon’s
35 Memorabilia, closely associated with the central principles of the new rhetoric in Phaedrus
36 (diairéseis, synagogai) and thus give occasion for promoting the montage as the most efficient
37 method for increasing creativity in literary writings, as will be seen later. That the new rhetoric had
38 carried off an overwhelming victory over the rhetoric of a scholastic, technical type in the period of
39 the Second Sophistic can be inferred, among other things, from a particularly characteristic
40 statement we come across in Eunapius’ Lives (497) about Libanius’ rival Acacius said to have
decisively based his method on ancient models (léxis metà krótou pros ton archaión metéstrephe
41 týpon). On the basis of the similar formulation in Lucian [To One Who Said You’re a Prometheus
42 in Words (3): archaiotérón ti tou plásmatos] we can rightly assume that what was meant was
43 Socratic plasma – something that Rohde failed to notice, as will be seen later. The same is also true
44 for his failure to observe that Phaedrus, Socrates and Plato’s oeuvre as a whole account for the
45 better part of the citations and allusions in Philostratus and Eunapius’ Lives of the Sophists, as can
46 be concluded from the citation and allusion index such as the one provided by Wilmer Cave Wright
47 in his study edition of the mentioned authors.
the method itself. In order to understand how it is at all possible that an eternal life pulsates at high pressure through something seemingly dead, light must previously be shed on the phenomenon of the old Socratic plasma and the symbolism closely connected with it, as reflected in both Lucian’s and Philostratus’ work.

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

Lucian’s description of painting the portrait of Panthia contains two key messages, with the first of them reading: the above-mentioned principles are by themselves capable of making a divinity of a mortal woman, as was actually the case with Panthia after being happily turned into an artist’s model, and the second one being not so easy to decipher due to both a relatively unusual milieu it was transmitted from and something that appeared at first sight to be purely craftsmanslike in nature. This second message was for yet another reason hardly detectable, as evidenced by the fact that it has been conveyed implicitly to the readership exhorted by their author to raise the logical question as to how great potential the above-mentioned method must necessarily have for making a god of an artist, i.e., rhetorician, if what seemed to be an ordinary artist’s model acquired, due to that, characteristics of immortality.34

The answer to the question of what has such a daemonic power could be found in the emblematic passage from the second part of Plato’s programmatic dialogue where we come across Socrates’ open confession that he personally regards anyone capable of looking at the same time towards One (synagogai) and many (diaiρéseis) as a god, which makes him walk after that person and enthusiastically follow in his footsteps.35 This kind of “following in someone else’s footsteps” will, as will be seen later, turn out to be the keywords when it comes to shedding light on the phenomenon of the Greek novel as well as the better part of post-classical Greek literature. Thus, the main message, conveyed through painting the portrait of Panthia, essentially characterized by montage, reads: the author makes known to his readership in a graphic and yet enigmatic way that he, filled with a kind of religious fervour, also keeps following in Socrates’ footsteps, looking on him as a divinity, as testified, among other things, by the fact that both the concepts and the scenic elements of his dialogues are reminiscent of their Platonic models.36

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

35 Phaedrus, 266b–c with an allusion to Homer “Odyssey (5, 193): ἡγοσσμαί δυνάτων ἐν καὶ μή πολλῷ πεφύκος δὲν, τὸ ἄν διέκου KatÓpisqe met’ ἐκνίων ἐστίν qeoro καὶ ἐκνίων τῷ ἄν δυνάμθνου διαῦ dr@n.

36 Cf. The Dead Come to Life, or the Fisherman, 6 where the message of Lucian’s devoutness to the ideals of Platonic, or rather Socratic philosophy is conveyed implicitly with the
We can grasp the very essence of montage as a method closely connected with and inseparable from following in someone else’s footstep when contrasting it with its very opposite, such as invention – something that will shed light on and help us understand what seemed at first sight to be quite uncommon aesthetic and evaluation criteria applied in later times, such as those of the Second Sophistic, namely criteria which turned out unexpectedly to be essentially based on both the key premises of Platonic philosophy and its emblematic images. In Lucian’s fairly brief writing Prometheus es in verbis, we come across such an emblematic image exuding Platonic influence and showing in a vivid, straightforward manner the core of the relationship between the two opposite methods referred to above, with the invention itself, explicitly characterized as plasma, being therein symbolized by Promethean figures made of clay and becoming living creatures as soon as Athena breathes into the mud and thus makes the clay models live, which is why the creation resulting from such a method assumed, as was to be expected, characteristics of a full-blown, truly living art.\(^{37}\)

On the other hand, the assembling itself, based in a decisive measure on the archetype, (ἐρχέτυπον - archétypon), was also denoted by the term plasma in Lucian’s mentioned work and, moreover, additionally characterized by the attribute ἐρχαίοτερον (archaióteron)\(^{38}\) with the intent of giving honour to the method itself, as testified by the fact that he prides himself on his devoutness to the montage while disparaging the invention as καινόθή (kainótes)\(^{39}\), καινοποιεῖν (kainopoiein)\(^{40}\) and καινουργῶν (kainourgón)\(^{41}\) understood as the sheer novelty and as such lasting only for a short period of time. For now at least, we have the sense that the seemingly dead art which originated in the process of assembling is of a higher order than the one sprung from invention, and what we still need to be

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\(^{37}\) To One Who Said You’re a Prometheus in Words, 3: … suneirėžezeto dė ti ka” 1 Ἀγνές ἡ μπρέσουσα τὸν φιλὸν κα’ αἰεμυστά απεπόσα εἴναι τ’ ἐπάσματα (ἐμψυχα poióasa ta plás mata).

\(^{38}\) To One Who Said You’re a Prometheus in Words, 3: ὥμο δὲ οὐ πένυ ϕκανὸν, ἐναι δὲ καινοπιεῖν δοκ…ἡν, ἐνδε ἀεικῇ τῇ ἱστει ἐρχαίοτερον τὶ τοὰ πλάσματον, ὡ τοὰ ἐπ’γονὸν ἡ στίν (archaióteron τι του plásmatos).

\(^{39}\) To One Who Said You’re a Prometheus in Words, 3.

\(^{40}\) To One Who Said You’re a Prometheus in Words, 3.

\(^{41}\) To One Who Said You’re a Prometheus in Words, 3.
assured that our initial assumption was not off the mark is yet another emblematic image now concerning the concept of assembling, i.e. montage itself.

As such an image could not be found in Lucian’s work, we were thus forced to make a detour into the same spiritual milieu and one of its most representative works such as Philostratus’ Imagines, where we came across it. The finding itself surpassed all expectations in so far as it subsequently turned out that Philostratus’ description of a painting representing Daedalus’ workshop makes up – together with Lucian’s emblematic image of Prometheus’ modeling human figures in clay – some kind of a methodological diptych, with its parts standing in sharp contrast to each other. That on the painting referred to above Daedalus is represented as Socrates and his workshop as that of Socrates can be inferred from the fact that he speaks Attic, being, moreover, barefooted and clothed in tribon as a characteristic Socratic overcoat. That this is an allusive and yet elegant technique can be deduced from the fact that before starting on modeling his figures Daedalus is represented as “looking intently at the intelligible reality exceeding by far the cognitive powers of the human mind,” – a fact which clearly points to the famous passage from the myth of the winged chariot in Phaedrus dealing with ØperourÉnioj (hyperouránios), i.e. the top of the vault of heaven as a realm of perfect Forms, which could be regarded as yet another clear indication that Philostratus thereby wanted to lay particular stress on the fact that he remained faithful to the ideals of a new art essentially based on the key postulates of the new rhetoric as expressed in Phaedrus.

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

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42 Imagines, 1, 16 (Pasiphae).
43 Imagines, 1, 16): αὐτῷ Ὁ Δα...Δαλοῦ ξττικ...ζεὶ μὲν ἂν ν κα" τῷ εἶδοι Ὑπερσοφὸν τι ἀννουν βλῆπων … (hypérsophón ti kai énnoun blépon).
44 247b–248a.
different, as in the case of another painting by Philostratus representing Achilles as a child and his ethos. Thus, what has emerged is a sharp contrast between Promethean plasma and its limited lifespan on one side and the old Socratic plasma on the other, with the latter’s daemonic potential to give its creations eternal life.

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

The Song of the Sirens: Old Socratic “Plasma” at its Best and its Reflection in the Greek Novel

Despite what has been said about the main aesthetic and methodological principles, as expressed in Philostratus and Lucian’s emblematic images and the literary canons of the latter, we need yet another key detail which additionally could explain why the old Socratic plasma held a special attraction for the above-mentioned authors, as evidenced by the fact that they walked after Socrates with religious fervour and followed in his footsteps, inspired, as it seems, by the above mentioned celebrated message of Phaedrus, which made them look on the

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45 Imagines, 2, 2 (Education of Achilles).
46 In Praise of Demosthenes, 14: ἀμυχον κα` σφυρέλατον ἐπο...ησε τόν λόγον (ἐμψυχον και σφύρελατον εποιεσε τον λόγον).
47 Imagines 1, 16: ... τὸν Ἐρετύχου πόλον δὲ τῶν προτείνετο κα` τῶν ... τῶν σεπερντί θελεντέο τη ... μετά διάρρημα (ἐσπυρέλατον, σκέπασιν, πριόνι).
48 Greater Hippias, 304b: ἄμασματε το... ἀματικα κα` περιτματα τόν λόγων ... κατ' ἄθροι διαρρηματα (κνεσματα ... και περιτματα τον λογον κατα βραχυ διερμενα).
legendary philosopher as a divinity - something that will provide an incentive for recreating ideals of aesthetics and life, restored to all their former glory in the later periods of the Second Sophistic, as will be seen shortly.

We can obtain an answer to the question concerning a magnetic attraction exerted on the men of letters by Socrates’ plasma compared, among other things, to the songs of the Sirens in Alcibiades’ speech in the Symposium,\(^49\) only when establishing a connection between the critical judgments of two authors, who, as far as ancient literary criticism is concerned, were the only theoreticians of style that hit the mark and noticed an ironical, comical note in Socrates’ or Plato’s way of speaking and writing, as testified by Aristotle’s assertion\(^50\) that Plato by using of one and the same stylistic device in Phaedrus such as dithyrambic compounds managed to achieve a huge effect, resulting in the fusion of polar opposites, such as pathos and humour, and what Aristotle seemed to hint at was most probably Socrates’ second speech on love as well as its emblematic feature, the myth of the winged chariot. Aristotle’s assertion becomes increasingly important if complemented by the statement we encounter in Lucian’s writing De domo\(^51\) about Socrates proclaiming the lofty ideals, and at the same time imperceptibly poking fun at Phaedrus of Myrrhinus as if the latter were – to paraphrase the author’s words – a small, snotty child.

Thus, the myth of the winged chariot turned out to be, in keeping with Norden’s favourite term, a specific Signatur of Socrates’ style, in so far as both flying up to ethereal heights, clothed in lyric images, and a certain comicality reminiscent of childish naïve tales were mixed with and fused to each other in it in such a way, that the human eye – to use yet again Philostratus’ celebrated analogy\(^52\) – might not be capable of discerning where the sublime ends and the comical begins and what is so laughable in an absolutely lofty subject-matter.\(^53\) This kind of unparalleled combination of polar opposites in Socrates’ style was regarded, due to its daemonic power, as something beyond imitation, just the way any attempt to remain indifferent to this type of creation reminiscent of a specific song of the Sirens was deemed next to impossible. What can be adduced as an additional reason to explain how peerless this feature of Socrates’ style was is Lucian’s oeuvre itself in which the method of interweaving polar opposites such as the serious and the laughable was characterized by perfect harmony and symmetry.\(^54\) Yet despite all this, the above-mentioned parts of a whole might be separated from each other if an operation were to be carried out on the text with

\(^{49}\) 216a.

\(^{50}\) Art of Rhetoric, 3, 7 (1408b).

\(^{51}\) Hall, 4.

\(^{52}\) Philostratus, Imagines, 2, 2.

\(^{53}\) On the mixture of the serious and the laughable as a widespread ideal of life and aesthetics in late antiquity and the Middle Ages see Ernst Robert Curtius, Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1961\(^1\)), 419 – 434. It is worth mentioning that Platonic origin of the mixture is not even touched upon in his summary presentation of the phenomenon.

\(^{54}\) To One Who Said You’re a Prometheus in Words, 5.
the precision of a surgeon, so that an attentive reader, in keeping with Philostratus’
analogy, could almost without difficulty discern where the serious ends and the
laughable begins.

Thus, as far as the aforesaid main characteristic of Socrates’ style is
concerned, the men of letters had to content themselves with a substitute for it,
such as imitating the remaining features of his art of speaking, with those allusive
and symbolic standing out distinctly from the rest, as testified by a particularly
characteristic passage from Plato’s early dialogue *Laches*\(^5^5\) where we come across
an explicit statement saying that Socrates’ speech on children passes, as a rule,
imperceptibly into one about men – a fact which recommended him for the teacher
of children and adults and, by the same token, of the entire Greek world, which
will find its clear reflection in both the novel and the works of the major exponents
of the Second Sophistic, as will be seen shortly. Another characteristic of Socrates’
style, as expressed in dithyrambic compounds, poetic images and analogies,
seemed convenient to be set as a model for imitation, all the more as it was, along
with the aforementioned ones, used in his speeches in *Phaedrus* and *Phaedo* in
such a way that the entire phenomenon could rightly be regarded as a
philosophical poetry.\(^5^6\)

Finally, a combination of the mentioned features of Socrates’ style
immediately sprang to mind as an ideal solution, in so far as this kind of
philosophical poetry seemed to be closely linked to the symbol and thus to leave
ample room for men of letters to exalt the glory of Socratic or Plato’s philosophy
with the noble aim to make it, in keeping with the key message of Socrates’
political testament in *Alcibiades*,\(^5^7\) continuously resound like a specific song of the
Sirens for centuries to come – something that, as far as the mentioned litterateurs
are concerned, could have been achieved by playing a specific game of hide-and-
seek with the analogies, namely a play essentially based on recycling one and the
same archetypal idea and resulting in an entire sea of concepts. That the above-
mentioned testament might have played an important role in the process of
conceiving the poetics of both the Greek novel and the literary products of the
Second Sophistic can be deduced from the fact that for the men of letters Platonic
philosophy, Socratic style and its marvelous plasma were, no matter how
paradoxical it may sound, more important than their own writings, as can be

\(^{5^5}\) 188b.
\(^{5^6}\) Cf. Giovanni Reale, *Platone, Simposio: introduzione, traduzione, note e aparati* (Milano: Bompiani, 2000), 41: “... Platone vuole indicare in modo emblematico (sc. by means of
Socrates’ successful attempt to drive Agathon and Aristophanes to the admission that the same man
could have the knowledge required for writing comedy and tragedy and that the fully skilled
tragedian could be a comedian as well) la sua convinzione di essere proprio lui tale poeta. La sua
opera, nella dimensione del vero guadagnato mediante la filosofia, e quindi come poesia filosofica,
invera e supera la tragedia e la commedia.”
\(^{5^7}\) 123d, where the stress is laid on the two crucial forces, such as ‘wisdom’ and ‘industry’,
or rather *sof...a* (*soφία*) and *epmśleia* (*ēpiméleia*) which were to be given later on a role of a
specific bulwark in defending the Greek living space from foreign influences as well as a guarantor
of victory in any future clashes with the barbarian element.
inferred from Lucian’s explicit statement, which could serve as the guideline for reading their own oeuvre including that of the authors of the Greek novel.

**Byzantine Novel: Barbarism or Symbolism?**

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

Already in the introductory passages from Makrembolites’ novel we come across the scene wherein the novel protagonist compares himself to both divinity and Socrates. The names of Socrates’ legendary ancestors, Daedalus and

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

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

60 *Hysmine and Hysminias*, 1, 3, 1: Ἐκ κεραυνοῦ καρφίτα δέσκομαι παρ’ αὖτάς ὅτι κεραυνὸς ἔμφασις ἀπὸ τὸν ἀνθρώπινον κόσμον περιέχει, ὃν ἰδίως καὶ τὸν Ἀθηναίον κόσμον ἀπείρον χάριν ἐκεῖνον ἢν ἑπάνω ἢν καὶ τὴν ἀνθρώπινην κόσμον ἐπηρεάζειν.”

61 *Hysmine and Hysminias*, 1, 3, 2): ἡμέρας δὲ περιείσθεν, ἰσότον ἢς ἔμφασις ἀπὸ τὴν ἀνθρώπινην κόσμον ἑπάνω ἢς ἐπηρεάζειν.

62 *Hysmine and Hysminias*, 1, 5, 6: ἡμέρας δὲ περιείσθεν (sc. figuras avium) … Daidälou ce ré tecnoUrken …
Hephaestus, are also mentioned in the same context and, moreover, associated with the making of bird figures adorning the well in the garden in Aulikonis, namely a well the motionless water surface of which is said — due to the wonderful effect produced by white island marble laid in its bottom and artfully marked by dark dappling — to make an impression of running like a stream, with stormy sea waves at times seemingly swelling on it, which seems to contain a veiled allusion to both the emblematic feature of Socrates’ speeches, equated in Hippias with making muddy the discussion, and the daemonic power of his word reminiscent of a truly poetic, i.e. Homeric, utterance capable of provoking storms even on the river of the dead in the underworld, as can be inferred from a passage from Lucian’s oeuvre. There is in the same context yet another emblematic image, this time borrowed from Ion, in which poet or, to be more precise, rhapsode is represented as an ordinary channel having no higher purpose than to let the daemonic force of poetry, streaming from the divine, celestial heights, pass through him and thereby create the possibility for that force to both reveal itself to the world and people and make them dance to the beat of its lovely rhythms capable of galvanizing anyone. In a specific game of hide-and-seek the archetype in Ion was subjected to a strange kind of metamorphosis in Makrembolites’ novel, as a result of which it turned out to be almost unrecognizable, as evidenced by the fact that the men appearing in the archetypal concept were substituted in the latter with the trees, said to be broadening their branches and embracing themselves in the rhythms of a choral song in order to form a vault of crowns impenetrable to sun-beams otherwise reaching to the ground only when Zephyrus creates some kind of a channel on the top of crowns by shifting their leaves with his whiff — something that in an allusion to the celebrated Iliad verse was characterized by

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63 Hysmine and Hysminias, 1, 5, 6: § pEnq (sc. figuras avium) “Hfestojacalkourghe.”
64 Hysmine and Hysminias, 1, 5, 7: tOn toa fršatoj puqmšna nhsièthj tškOšmei l...qoj leukOj mšn, 4ll’ Œpemela...neto ka’t mšrh ... ae” mnteajen dokein tO Ùdwr kinesqai dihnekij ka” katakumatoàsqai ka” òÇeOn ònakurtoàsqai:
65 Lesser Hippias, 373a: 4ll’ Swkréthj ... “e” taretei “m n toj lOgoj ka” òwoiken é sper kakourgoànti:
66 Charon, or the Inspectors, 7. Cf. n. 19.
67 Ion, 533d – 534b: òesti gj r toa toçnh mìn o¼k xn parj so” per” ‘Om»rou eà õgein, Ö nàn ¼½ ælegen, qe...a dì d¼namij ¼ se kinei;
68 Hysmine and Hysminias, 1, 4: dEfính gj r ka” murr...nh ka” õparittoj ka” Œmpeloj ... “mpoàsi toÝj klédouj ae” cearaj ka” éesper korO Ôn sustheàmena katorofàsí tSn kApon.
69 8, 19: seirhyn cruse...hn tm x õuranògen kremEsantej.
the novel’s protagonist as *chryséa seirá* (“a chain of gold”) symbolizing the heavenly love in Lucian and, by the same token, enthusiasm and mania-related origins of both poetry and rhetoric streaming from the realm beyond heaven, as depicted in the myth of the winged chariot.

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

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70 Hysmine and Hysminias, 1, 4: μνέ γε δε εἶπον „δὲν: κρυσάν κλῆσω μοι τῷν seir£n, Ἁγίσανης: On the popularity of the Homeric image closely associated with the myth of the winged chariot in the period of the Second Sophistic cf. Lucian, *Hermotimus or Concerning the Sects*, 3: Ἐ τα Ἰμαρ Ζηνιάν την seir£n καςεις τότε αμένα τ’ ὁγού, ἃ π ἰν σε ἄνασπ διλαδήν κα” ἄνκουφ...ζεί προι αμένα.

71 Lucian, *In Praise of Demosthenes*, 13: τῷν d’ ὁφραν...ου κρυσάν τινο τ’ seir£j οἐλκις (sc. καταυγ’ „ν φιλοσοφοις τ’ ὁγο’) οἐ πορ” κα” τ’κοξοις ἀμτιγκεσαν δουσαες κατασεις nοσου βωμετων.

72 In Praise of Demosthenes, 13 where Demosthenes’ oratory is essentially characterized by σοφρον manía: ... ἀλλ’ ἀμέν ἀμένα τα ἱμαρ ζηνιάν την seir£j ἄστρον τα καςεις „δαν kamξίμπαν (sc. τ’τιν d’ ὁφραν...ου κρυσάν τινο τ’ seir£j οἐλκις) ... ἄνθρωπον τ’ νευκιν...

73 276c: οὐκ ἦν σπουδὴ αμέν, ἀμέν ὁδηγει μελαι σπε...ρων δι’ καλεμου μετ’ ὁγο’ ἄνεμεν τινο τ’ ὁγο’ βοργ’σεν, κ’ ἄνεμεν δε ιγκανι ττιθακω διδέκαι (ουκ ἀρα σπουδει αμεν εν υδατι γράψει μελαν...).

74 276d: ἀλλ’ τα καμ’ γε σχημασία μπουμ ... παιδις κερίν σπειρ αμέν γειει, ἄταν δε γειει, μετ’ αμέν τα υμομπομματα καθαυριζομενοι ... (tous men en γράμμασι κεπους παιδις τα και γράμματε).

75 Hysmine and Hysminias, 11, 21: σύ’ δ’ ἀλλ’, Ι Ποσειδον ... μεν ου περισσεισ τ’τιν μεν μεν μεν (τηνεναντον) ... τ’ ακα’ μοι μεν ὁδηγει καταγραφων κα’ μσρι χασαξηκετων φηρην τναπονιπτα (en υδατι καταγραφον).

76 Hysmine and Hysminias, 11, 22): σύ’ δ’, Ι Α’ ματερ ... ὅτα δ’ οὐκ ηναδεις ΙΔηνομα ··· ὎λον δρ’μα Τ’ κακ’ ‘μοι τοι καταγραφωσα (τοις φυτοις καταγραφούσα).
their meaning just due to the fact that it was, first of all, necessary to establish a logical relationship between the keywords appearing in the same context, such as the names of the mythical personalities Icarus, Daphne and Hyacinth, including the emblematic metaphor of living speech as a sculpture in Plato’s Republic,77 slightly altered by the addition of the adjective katEcrouson (katáchureon) in Makrembolites.78 Only thus was it possible to draw the conclusion that the author by using of the above-mentioned keywords makes it known to his readership in a more implicit manner that his own story might also be eternized only if it assumes, like Socrates’ life and words, characteristics of myth and legend – something that can only be achieved by applying the frequently mentioned principles of the new rhetoric, diairesis and synagogai, to his own written compositions as well as by modeling his own and his protagonists’ course of action down to the last detail upon Socrates’ life, which found its reflection in the way of living enjoying widespread popularity in the later periods of the Second Sophistic covered by Eunapius’ Lives, as will be seen shortly.

That it’s all about Socratic model is further corroborated by the final message we encounter at the very end of the novel, with the genre’s term drama79 appearing in it not at all, as it might seem at first sight, by sheer chance, a term with the help of which an essential relationship might, contrary to all expectations, be established between the allusiveness of Socrates’ word, symbolism and the novel as a genre. And the message itself is hidden, as evidenced by the fact that the author recommends his own and his darling’s adventures simultaneously to the opposed groups within the reading audience,80 as represented by those already seized by erotic mania as well as those whose attitude to love is marked by continence, i.e. “sophrosýne”, while, regarding the full context essentially characterized by the emblematic images and metaphors of Platonic philosophy, it is pretty much clear that the message itself was conveyed in an enigmatic way to the entire readership, just because in the adventures referred to above both “mania” and “sophrosýne” were – in keeping with the final message of the myth of the winged chariot – interwoven with and fused to each other in perfect unity and proportion, considered to be a guarantee of a blissful life in this world.

That the final message, conveyed by the author at the very end of his work, should be interpreted in a symbolic way is further corroborated by yet another

77 540c: pagkÉlouj, òæh, tøj Ïrkontaj, Ï Sèkratæj, éser ãndriantopoi Ïj Ïpe...rgasai: (hòser andriantopoiós apêrgasai).
78 Hysmine and Hysminias, 1, 4: ka... tîn ÏygÎnun kataarrhtoreÚsei taàta ka” Ïæj Ïqéntaj stxîv toj Ïgoij ãndriénta caklourg»sei katEcrouson (andriánta katáchureon).
79 Hysmine and Hysminias, 11, 24: klÁsij Ïsstw tí b...bLJ tÔ kaq’ Ïsm...nhn dr@ma ka’ tÔn Ïsmín...an tøm$$ (to kath’ Hysminen dràma kai tôn Hysminian emê).
80 Hysmine and Hysminias, 11, 23: Ïson mën Ïån”m”n Ïnqreøj”m”rtikèteron, tîn pollín ”m”rtikÌn caríwn ”møj Ïpodêktaei ka” Ïson parqenikÎn ka” semnoterÎn, tÁj swfrosÚnhj pëlin Ïgêsetai: ka” Ïûtwj ”møn Ïæstai t’/ tÁj m”m” mhj Ïqénata.
scene we come across almost at the very end of Prodromos’ novel, with the key principles of old Socratic plasma, or rather new rhetoric, diairéseis and synagogai, being in it visualized, as was otherwise the case with Lucian’s Imagines. What is depicted in the mentioned scene are the embraced figures of the protagonists and their fathers at the moment of the highest possible delight such as their reuniification in the garden of Kratandros’ house in Cyprus after so long a period of time marked by endless wandering and suffering. The form of the embraced figures intertwined with each other and characterized as plēsij (plásis), gives the impression as if four bodies either coalesced into one head or one head ramified into four bodies,\(^1\) with Socratic plasma’s key principles, unrecognizably modified into diairšw (diairéo) and sunizÉnw (synizáno), thus being with almost religious fervour represented and eternized as a sculpture and, moreover, in the key passage such as the concluding one. We were, as it seems, quite justified in speaking of religious fervour, just due to the fact that one of the key terms, which is used to denote perfect number\(^2\) in the philosophy of Pythagoras, appears in the above-mentioned passage from Prodromos’ novel – something that could be explained by the author’s noble aim to achieve perfection in a symbol-based elaboration of detail.

The central part of Makrembolites’ novel or, to be more precise, its fourth book,\(^3\) which is largely made up of the description of the ensemble of three large scale paintings depicted on the garden wall in Aulikomis, speaks volumes about the author’s aspiration to achieve perfection in terms of composition. What we are referring to is a series of wall paintings with Eros’ boyish figure represented as naked and disproportionately large and, moreover, placed right in the middle of the cycle so as to be framed on one side by allegorical representations of Virtues and on the other by those of months, symbolized by the human figures denoting time and season-limited occupations, such as those of soldier, gardener, ploughman, shepherd and hunter, to mention just a few. We shall decipher the hidden meaning of the ensemble of paintings only when equating the allegorical figures of the Virtues and those of the months with the world of gods and the world of men respectively, which gives occasion for interpreting Eros’ central position in the mentioned ensemble in accordance with the key message of Socrates’ discourse in the Symposium, with Eros himself being therein identified with the daemon filling the void between these worlds by both transmitting and interpreting messages coming from the world of gods to that of men, and conversely.\(^4\) Thus, the cycle of

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\(^1\) Theodoros Prodromos, Rhodanthe and Dosikles, 9, 317 – 330: ka\(^+\) schmatismôn kainôn tøn xezwgrÉfoun: ã aerinto gîr tšttarej Ûŋqrwpoi kētw / æ ej e„j kefal¾n prospefukØtej m…an / ... / m…an kefal¾n e„j tetraktÝn sswmÉtwn / diaireqesan, À tetraktÝn sswmÉtwn / ÏàEon sunizhkuan e„j kēran m…an: / zùÖn ti tetrÉswmon, À toÚnant...on / monoprØswpon tettÉrwn zÈwñ plésin.

\(^2\) Rhodanthe and Dosikles, 9, 326, 327.

\(^3\) Hysmine and Hysminias, 4, 3 – 20.

\(^4\) 202e.
paintings with the key thesis of Socrates’ speech in the *Symposium* depicted in it turned out to be nothing else than a symbol of the daemonic power of the old Socratic plasma, which, like Eros himself, transmits messages from one world to another.

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

The life of Libanius, as depicted in Eunapius’ *Vitae*, shows the extent to which the sophists of the period were driven by passion ambition to live up to their billing as Socrates’ followers. What is being referred to here is a noble effort made by Libanius or, to be more precise, his “mission impossible” undertaken with the aim to transfer the mentioned daemonic features of Socrates’ style to his way of living and his course of action. As it was very hard, as far as Socrates’ style is 

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86 *Lives of the Sophists*, 492.
88 Cf. Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists*, 470 where the most sublime aspect of Platonic philosophy, such as both the translation of ideas and forms from the place beyond heaven to the earthly plane and the divination closely associated with it, as depicted in the myth of the winged chariot in *Phaedrus*, is personified by a woman, none other than Sosipatra, who is, not at all by mere chance, presented as falling to both prophetic ecstasy and divinatory mania at the very moment she was discoursing on the central theme dealt with in the mentioned Plato’s work, such as the constituent parts of the soul and its descent into earth. Of the influence exercised by Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* upon Eunapius’ writing clearly speaks the fact that Sosipatra’s character is modeled on the famous passage from the mentioned work (1, 4), where Socrates lays stress on the importance of divination for every well-ordered society.
89 Der griechische Roman, 71: “Im wircklichen Leben entwickelte sich höchstens den Heteren gegenüber eine gewisse Ritterlichkeit, die nun freilich mit einem sehr unangenehmen Zusatz frivoler Sentamentalität versetzt war ... Von einer wesentlich veränderten Stellung ehrbarer Mädchen und Frauen erfahren wir nichts”.
90 495 – 496.
concerned, to discern where the serious ends and the laughable begins and what it is so laughable in quite a lofty subject-matter, so Libanius himself was in a similar way regarded as a second self by all those admitted to his teaching despite the fact that they were pursuing modes of life opposed to one another, with the consequence that everyone applauded in him qualities that were opposite. This can be explained by the fact that all possible temperaments were pulsating in Libanius’ personality, including those contrasting with each other and mutually exclusive.

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

Due to the limited space, we focus our attention only on some of Rohde’s particularly characteristic theses, as presented in the mentioned famous chapter, so as to highlight the deficiencies in their elaboration, and, by the same token, to point to the need for re-evaluating the entire corpus of post-classical Greek literature, all the more as the mentioned theses have done, as already seen, a great injustice to the Greek novel to degrade it to the level of barbarism, caricature⁹¹ and, moreover, children’s naive fairy tales.

That something was wrong, as already implied above, with Rohde’s theses is also shown by the fact that the Greek novel, contrary to what was thought, turned out to be a specific hymn to both Platonic philosophy and the legendary Socratic plasma – a fact which may urge the need for revising some of his famous theses, all the more as they, erroneously considered undisputed, found their reflection in large-scale works on literary history, rhetorical prose and the novel as a genre, such as those of Albin Lesky⁹², Eduard Norden⁹³ and Michail Bachtin⁹⁴ respectively. Taking a retrospective look at Rohde’s theses seems to be important for yet another reason, since by doing so a key principle of great relevance to modern-day literary studies will be brought to light, along with a methodological imperative of great significance for future research on both the novel and the entire post-classical Greek literature.

All the shortcomings of Rohde’s theses were evident from the fact that low and selfish motives such as glory, splendid outward appearance and riches were regarded by him as the three mighty Sirens exercising a decisive influence over both the world view and the literary activity of the leading exponents of the Second Sophistic, while, on the contrary, they were inspired by the lofty ideal of following in Socrates’ footsteps and made great efforts to dance to the rhythms of

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⁹¹ Der griechische Roman, 559: “Der ganze Roman (sc. that of Makrembolites) ist nichts als eine Karrikatur der Erzählung des Achilles Tatius”.

⁹² Geschichte der griechischen Literatur (Bern und München: Francke Verlag, 1971).

⁹³ Die antike Kunstprosa.

corybantic élan\textsuperscript{95} setting in motion his speeches in \textit{Phaedrus} so as to be able to
revive in the best way possible his old plasma which they, following the example
of Alcibiades in Plato’s homonymous dialogue, deemed to be a rapturous song of
the Sirens. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that he characterized the rhetoric of
the period as nothing else than “the Asiatic oratory known for its evil nature,”\textsuperscript{96}
with just the qualifier “Asiatic” being indicative of his disparaging attitude
towards both the novel and rhetoric, in so far as it, instead of a geographic term,
became an evaluation criterion now standing for literary creation of the worst
possible kind, equated with the greatest possible evil and in other passages from
his monograph characterized as “an eloquence bereft of emotions,”\textsuperscript{97} “rhetorical
emptiness”\textsuperscript{98} as well as “immense vanity.”\textsuperscript{99} Rohde was, unfortunately, unaware of
the far-reaching consequences of the negative kind this thesis of his would
necessarily have had if a question arose of how it was at all possible for such evil
to continue to exist for an entire millennium and yet experience a resplendent
renaissance in an epoch as late as that of the Komnenoi.

\textbf{Conclusion: The Forthcoming Battle for Symbols}

Finally, it turned out that all deficiencies in Rohde’s attitudes towards the
Greek novel resulted from the fact that his research on the theory of narrative,
quite rightly deemed a strong starting point, was not brought to an end, in so far as
it was not extended to the Byzantine period, more precisely to both 11\textsuperscript{th} century
rhetoric and the work of one of its most prominent exponents, with the \textit{subject-}

\textsuperscript{95} Cf. Eunapius, \textit{Lives of the Sophists}, 501 – 502 where we come across a very revealing
metaphor of reasoning, or rather elaborating the concepts and arguments as a “dance unfolding
in the soul,” namely a metaphor used by the author to graphically illustrate the effects of
Chrysanthius’ speech which like the sweetest song insinuates itself into all men’s ears so as to both
find its echo in the souls of the entire audience and – in keeping with the ideal of the new rhetoric
as advocated by Socrates in \textit{Phaedrus} – be adapted to the most diverse temperaments. The whole
passage can also be regarded as an echo of Plato’s concept of theater of the world as reflected in
the \textit{Laws}, where the very processions, sacrifices, songs and dances were pointed out as the most
advisable way of acting for man, regarded as an ordinary marionette of a deity, to spend his life in
peacetime as best as possible by playing at the noblest of pastimes, in \textit{Philebus} (50b) succinctly
characterized as tragedy and comedy of life.

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Der griechische Roman}, 311: “Außer einer strengeren und nüchterneren Übung der
Kunst ... gab es eine üppigere Weise, welche im Glanze eines barock überladenen und grellen
Schmuckes der Rede sich gefiel, die unter dem Namen der asianischen übel bekannte
Beredsamkeit.”

\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Der griechische Roman}, 348: “Freilich war diese Art empfindungsloser Schönrednerei
die notwendige Frucht einer bis zur höchsten Stufe der technischen Entwicklung getriebenen
Redekunst ...”

\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Der griechische Roman}, 380: “Wir haben diese rhetorische Leere, der jeder Gegenstand
lediglich zum Vorwand und Anlaß über rein formalen Kunstübung dienen muß, aus dem ganzen
Wesen der Sophistik zu begreifen versucht; wir werden nicht erwarten, daß aus den erotischen
Exerziten dieser Wortkünstler eine tiefere Seelenerfahrung zu uns spreche.”

\textsuperscript{99} \textit{Der griechische Roman}, 341: “Voran steht eine, zuweilen ganz maßlose Eitelkeit. Diese
war freilich ein natürlicher Ergebnis ihres, ganz auf die persönliche Virtuosität gestellten Berufes.”
manner of poetry appearing all of a sudden in his definition of the third type of narration, which, from a purely formal point of view, could explain why stylistic elements of poetry have been widely applied in the Greek novel’s prose narrative. As a result, Rohde had no other choice but to postulate omnipotence of rhetoric as expressed in its centripetal force strong enough, in his view, to “suck in” all other genres, including both poetry and philosophy itself.

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

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

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

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


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