ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΗΣΑΝΤΕΣ ΕΝ ΔΟΞΗ ΤΟΥ ΣΟΦΙΣΤΕΥΣΑΙ:

An Enigmatic Depiction of the Second Sophistic in
Philostratus and Eunapius’ Lives of the Sophists or What is
indeed the Mentioned Sophistic?

On the basis of evidence obtained by unraveling the enigmas in Philostratus and
Eunapius’ Lives of the Sophists as well as the hidden meaning in some of the
crucial passages from Isocrates and Dio Chrysostom’s works related to their
understanding of the sophistic, we were able to arrive at the conclusion that the
Second Sophistic was, contrary to all expectations, closely connected not so much
with the rhetoric as with the philosophy itself, no matter what the so called sophists
say of the phenomenon in their attempts to mask the essence of things. Paradoxically
enough, it turned out that the enigma in Eunapius and, above all, Philostratus’
work played almost the same role as did myth in Herodotus’ historical work in so far
as only the skillful use of the mentioned stylistic device might confer an aura of
magic to the scarce material being at the disposal of the authors.

Keywords: Second Sophistic; Philostratus; Eunapius; Legend of Socrates,
Xenophon’s Memorabilia; Isocrates; Platonismus; Enigma; Symbolism

Introduction

The phenomenon of the Second Sophistic, as presented by Philostratus in
his Lives of the Sophists, can best be symbolized by the centaur’s painted figure
as described in his Imagines, a figure whose human and equine constituent
parts are so fused together that the human eye is not at all capable of
discerning where one of the mentioned parts begins and where the other ends
and what, after all, could be considered to be genuinely human in the
centaur’s hybrid form. Curiously enough, it is the mentioned author’s
epigrammatic characterisation of the leading exponents of the Second
Sophistic, namely tous philosophésantas en dóxei tou sophisteûsai (4792), that
reminds us of the aforesaid hybrid form, a formulation that was destined to
assume characteristics of the winged word in the following time periods and
thus cause the phenomenon of the Second Sophistic to remain still shrouded
in mystery.

Paradoxically enough, the characterisation referred to above is made even
more enigmatic by the clarification of Philostratus saying that he applies the
name sophistés not only to orators whose surpassing eloquence won them a
brilliant reputation, but also to philosophers who expounded their theories

12, 2, 4 (Education of Achilles).
2 toÝj filosof»santaj ἦν dÔxV toà sofisteàsai ka” toÝj oÛtw kur...wj prosrhqshintaj
sofist’j ἦν dÚo bibl...a enºgray£ soi ...
with ease and fluency (484), with the the mentioned term thus implicitly including the exponents of the ancient sophistic and thereby indicating the difficulty in the enigma itself in so far as an equals-sign was set between the rival spiritual currents such as sophistic, philosophy and rhetoric, believed to have waged with each other one of the most bitter struggles in the history of ideas in the course of the last four centuries BC.³ The fact that the above-mentioned characterisation is the least difficult of all the others we encounter in the introductory passages from Philostratus' Lives speaks to the problem faced by the scholar.

We will now focus attention on other enigmas so as to be in a position to conclude what their function in Philostratus’ work is, and will begin by saying that it touches upon the domain of poetics, which in itself means that unraveling the enigmas is a necessary precondition for understanding the key message of not only Philostratus’ but also Eunapius’ biographies of the sophists, something without which it is in no way possible to adequately evaluate not only the works by the two mentioned authors but also the entire post-Classical Greek literature.

In the introductory passages from Philostratus’ biographies of the sophists we come across, except for the mentioned one, the other three enigmatic formulations pregnant with meaning, with their seductive nature being shown, among other things, by the fact that they play a game of hide-and-seek with the researcher, something that gains in importance all the more as the mentioned game represents the key element of the author’s poetics, as will be seen shortly. It is Philostratus’ most seductive formulation that we will start from, and when we say the most seductive we mean, above all, the fact that it contributed the most to the mystification of the Second Sophistic as a phenomenon, with the research work on the later Greek renaissance thus getting time and again caught in a vicious circle ever since Arnim’s own time.

In the key passage from the prologue to his Lives of the Sophists (481) Philostratus holds the view that the sophistic of his own time must not be

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³Arnim (1898: 4 ff.) advocated the view that the content of the notions *philosophos, sophistes* and *rhetor* had not considerably changed over time and thus had ended up being basically the same in the period of the late Greek renaissance as it was in the Athens of Socrates and Plato. In an attempt to prove his theory Arnim (77–84) makes the argument of an almost parallel turning towards rhetoric taking place in both the Peripatus and the Academy when headed in the third century BC by Lycon and Arcesilaus respectively, with this kind of innovation in the teaching process being regarded by the mentioned author as a decline in the case of Peripatus and a rise in the case of the Academy. He, moreover, considered Ariston’s living word resembling the song of the Sirens the culmination of this trend being thus erroneously associated with the sophistic rather than with Socrates.
called new, but rather second, because it is old, just due to the fact that it represents the same phenomenon as the ancient one. Contrary to all expectation, Philostratus shall outdo himself when clarifying this paradoxical attitude of his by saying that the new sophistic, unlike the ancient one, which used to discuss philosophical themes at length discoursing on courage, on justice, on the heroes and gods, on shape of the universe, made, so to say, the philosophy itself come down from heaven to earth by sketching the “types of the poor man and the rich, of princes and tyrants” and handling the arguments that are concerned with the historical and civilisational legacy bequeathed to the world by the great personalities. What immediately springs to mind after casting a cursory glance on this short list of themes is the fact that the favourite topics of the new sophistic are also Socrates’ themes of choice treated at length and elaborated above all in Plato’s Republic. The theme cited as the last, namely the historical and civilisational legacy bequeathed by great personalities, is also pregnant with profound meaning in so far as it points from afar to a specific legend, which has left an indelible mark on the Second Sophistic, as shall be seen shortly.

The second of Philostratus’ enigmatic formulations appearing in the prologue to his Lives of the Sophists seems to be even more important for our objectives in so far as it touches upon the problem of the method widely applied by the exponents of the new sophistic in both their public appearances and their literary works. Philostratus himself, although he maintains in categorical terms that there is no noteworthy difference between the exponents of the ancient and the new sophistic, contradicts himself when

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4To tell the truth, it should be said that the term Second Sophistic was itself in a certain measure disputable to none other than Schmid (1981: 688) and Lesky (1973: 1139), the authors of the most important monographs on the history of the Greek literature, in so far as it, according to the latter, leads astray and, in the view of the former, represents a specific kind of legend with too evident tendency concerning Aeschines as the creator of the new sophistic.

5It was this very formulation that influenced Gerth’s (1962: 725) understanding of the Second Sophistic, otherwise essentially based on Graindor’s (1930: 9) attitude, according to which there are no substantial differences between the ancient and the new sophistic, in so far as both were decisively marked by the purely formal element such as rhetoric. The same holds true for Kroll (1940: 1039 ff.).

6It would be better, instead of “the types of the poor man and the rich, of princes and tyrants”, to use more accurate formulations, such as social classes of the poor and the rich and the mindsets of the princes and the tyrants respectively.

7481: ... τῆς ὑπ’ ὅνομα ὁποιόςει ὃς, which, as it seems, was not quite accurately translated by C. Wright: “... arguments that are concerned with the definite and special themes for which history shows the way.” Cf. Montanari (2004) sv. onoma (e) assuming the meaning of persona.
pointing to the essential difference in the methods applied by the founders of the old and the new sophistic, Gorgias and Aeschines respectively, a difference manifesting itself in the fact that, unlike the followers of Gorgias who handled their themes as they pleased, i.e. trusting in both the inspiration of the moment and the improvisation, those of Aeschines handled them according to the rules of the art of rhetoric (481). In another passage from the mentioned prologue, Philostratus will attempt in an enigmatic way to eliminate this contradiction, while comparing the method of the philosophers to that of the sophists by saying that both are irresistibly reminiscent of the art of divination, with the only difference between them consisting in the fact that the philosophical method resembles the prophetic art which is controlled by man, i.e. logos, as distinguished from the sophistic one reminding him of the style applied by oracles and soothsayers, who themselves, to use the emblematic image of poet and rhapsode in Plato’s Ion (533d), give the impression of an automaton, or rather channel, through which a deity utters her voice in a flood of words. That supplementing freely the context in Philostratus’ Lives by using both the emblematic image in Ion and the term logos, essentially based on yet another emblematic image of Platonic philosophy, such as that of the winged chariot in Phaedrus (244a-257b), was not off the point, will be shown by what follows.

We come across the third enigmatic formulation at the very end of the prologue to the lives of the sophists, where truly magical features are ascribed to the art of the sophistic, as proved, in Philostratus’ view, by the fact that the Athenians shut the sophists out of the law-courts because of their great cleverness and that the two greatest exponents of the forensic oratory, Demosthenes and Aeschines, pitilessly and unrelentlessly ‘branded each other with the title sophistes’ (483) so as to discredit altogether the opposing side in the eyes of the jury. When again in the same context we encounter the fact that in their private life the two great men of the forensic oratory ‘claimed

481. In an attempt to conceal the essence of things, the method of the philosophers is directly linked by Philostratus to the one already applied “by the Egyptians and Chaldeans and, before them, by the Indians, who used to conjecture the truth by the aid of countless stars.”

9 What we ought to have in mind, as far as the absence of rhetoric in this comparison is concerned, is the fact that in Philostratus the terms sophistic and rhetoric are often used interchangeably.

10 On the interrelatedness between logos and mania in Plato’s philosophy cf. attitudes taken by Reale (2000: 231, n. 132): “L’ispirazione e la divina mania sono insufficienti, perché potrebbero al massimo essere portate al livello dei poeti e lasciare privi di scienza e di consapevolezza, le quali derivano dal logos. Occorre una mediazione sintetica di queste due forze, che è appunto quello che Platone cerca di fare con la sua filosofia.”
consideration and applause on the very ground that they were sophists’, as
testified by Aeschines’ account of Demosthenes boasting to his friends that he
had ‘won over the votes of the jury to his own views’ (484) by using his own
magical power, the impression cannot be avoided that what it is all about here
is yet another among many instances of dichotomy in the introductory
passages from Philostratus’ *Vitae sophistarum*. What makes this particular case
so interesting for the scholar is the fact that the core of the problem is not so
much the mentioned dichotomy concerning the use of the term *sophistes* by
both Demosthenes and Aeschines as what is omitted by the author, which in
itself is to be regarded as the greatest enigma. Philostratus himself seems to
have consciously avoided adducing another, even more important testimony
of Aeschines (1, 172), according to which Socrates was considered the sophist
par excellence by the Athenian public opinion of his own time. It’s just what
can lead us to the quintessence of the problem, such as unraveling the key
message of Philostratus’ *Lives*, something that can be achieved only in a
roundabout way, i.e. by deciphering the symbols, or rather enigmas,
manifesting themselves in the arrangement of the biographical material in the
introductory passages from the mentioned work, which can help us have a
clear insight into whose conception of the sophistic Philostratus had adopted.

The symbolism in the arrangement of the biographical material in the
introductory passages from Philostratus’ *Lives*

While conceiving his *Lives* Philostratus seems to have been faced with an
almost extremely difficult, if not impossible, task which consisted in providing
quite a common catalogue of a summary type with characteristics of an
interesting, exciting reading matter acquiring, if attentively read, truly magical
features in some of its passages. What he says in the very preface to announce
the summary character of his *Lives* by declaring that he will not add the
fathers’ names in all cases, but only for those sophists who were the sons of
illustrious men (479), speaks in itself of how enigmatic every remark of
Philostratus is, as shown by the fact that he hadn’t at his disposal enough
material of either a biographical or a literary nature so as to be in a position to
faithfully and reliably depict all the phases of an intellectual current which has
left an indelible mark on the entire post-classical Greek literature, something
that forced him into cunningly inventing superficial and bizzare motifs to
conceal the very essence of things.

The only somewhat more voluminous biographical material, which may
have come into his possession, seems to have covered the time period
overlapping with his own age, a period marked by the outstanding figure of
Herodes Atticus with his manifold activity, unlike that of all the other
exponents of the intellectual current, being presented in more detail (546 –
566), which is of additional importance to us, in so far as this detail in the
composition of the Lives clearly indicates that the section dedicated to Herodes
contains one of the well-concealed crucial messages. We shall see somewhat
later what this massage looks like, since it essentially depends on the
symbolism in the arrangement of the biographical and not only biographical
material in the introductory passages from Philostratus’ Lives, namely on what
is omitted or suggested by way of a barely perceptible allusion, to be precise.

The catalogue of both the so-called and genuine sophists appearing in the
introductory passages from Philostratus’ work can be divided into two almost
equal parts in which the arrangement plays a very important role. The first
part, or rather group, is made up of the names of the philosophers who
expounded their theories with ease and fluency of a rhetorician, whereas the
second one is mainly composed of the exponents of the ancient sophistic. The
catalogue of the philosopher opens with Eudoxus of Cnidus (484) followed by
Leo of Byzantium (485), Dias of Ephesus (486), Carneades (486), Philostratus
the Egyptian (486) and Theomnestus of Naucratis (486), with Dio of Prusa
(487-488) and Favorinus of Arelate (489–492) ending this brief survey as the
seventh and the eighth exponent of the group respectively, to which they
should not at all belong, given the epoch of their activity as well as their
personal attitudes, with the preliminary remark that giving a place of honour
to Favorinus at the very end of the list seems to be motivated by the author’s
covert intention to mystify the very essence of things. To tell the truth, it
should be said that there is an external reason for placing Dio in this group, in
so far as the activity of all of the group’s exponents (with only one exception)
is associated with the Academy, by the teachings of which Dio’s oeuvre was
also decisively influenced. We shall be able to understand the real reason for
placing Dio almost at the very end of the mentioned brief catalogue only after
taking a closer look at the names of the authors classed among sophists in the
other catalogue appearing in the introductory passages from Philostratus’
Lives.

At first sight, the last mentioned catalogue is, unlike the former, more
consistent, in so far as it is made up of the names whose relation to the
sophistic could be regarded as indisputable, but, on the other hand, what is
still enigmatic, as in the previous case, is their arrangement within the group.

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11He is in all likelihood the academician mentioned by Plutarch, Brutus 24, as a teacher
at Athens. Cf. C. Wright (1952: 16, n. 2).
12This can be explained only by the fact that Favorinus’ life was full of paradoxes so
cherished by the authors of the Second Sophistic, as testified by what he himself said
about his own life in the ambiguous style of an oracle: “Though he was a Gaul he led a
life of the Hellene; a eunuch, he had been tried for adultery; he had quarrelled with an
emperor and was still alive.”
13Philostratus the Egyptian about whose affiliation there is no hint in Philostratus’
cursory remark on his way of living.
Thus the list opens with the exponents of the ancient sophistic who play a very important role in Plato’s dialogues and, no less important, in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, such as Gorgias of Leontini (492-493), Protagoras of Abdera (494), Hippias of Elis (495), Prodicus of Ceos (496), Polus of Sicily (497), Thrasymachus of Chalcedon (497), Antiphon of Rhamnus (498-500), Critias of Athens (501-503), with somewhat extensive passages, dedicated to both Isocrates (503-506) and Aeschines (507-510) and their respective literary and rhetorical activity, ending, as in the previous case, this summary representation of facts. At first sight, one would be tempted to say that this brief register is a true reflection of Philostratus’ theses expounded in the prologue to the work, in so far as the names of the founders of the ancient and the new sophistic, or, in keeping with the author’s favourite terms, the first and the second one, i.e. those of Gorgias and Aeschines, are featured at the register’s beginning and end. But we have already become accustomed to the fact that in Philostratus nothing is what it seems to be at first glance and that all he says is associated with an enigma or a higher sense. Thus, the mention of Aeschines’ name at the very end of the second catalogue seems to represent a curious optical illusion aimed at shrouding the essence of things in magic and mystery. This can rightly give rise to raising the question of what it is which we base our assertions on.

The parallelism of places Dio and Isocrates occupy in the two brief catalogue referred to above points more than anything else to Philostratus’ favourite method of suggesting the essence of things by using hardly perceptible allusions. It is by this parallelism that Philostratus seemed to have admitted in a very subtle way that throughout its history the Second Sophistic had not always been the same phenomenon, as advocated by the attitudes taken in the introductory passages from his *Lives*, something that was, after all, indicated by his classing one of the greatest exponents of the mentioned intellectual current, none other than Dio Chrysostom, among the philosophers. If we then add to this the fact that the key names featuring in both of the registers, namely those of Dio and Isocrates, are presented in some kind of reversed chronological order, we have the impression that Philostratus by all means sought to obfuscate the very essence of the phenomenon and thus to make it possible for it to assume both magical and mystical characteristics. In order to gain insight into what the mentioned magic and mystic look like we must adhere to the chronological order and first focus attention on Isocrates so as to be in a position to conclude whose concept of the sophistic the author of the *Lives* adopted.
Isocrates and Dio’s understanding of the sophistic, Xenophon’s
Memorabilia and the legend of Socrates

What we encountered in Isocrates seemed to have made things even worse for us, in so far as it turned out that the mentioned author, like Philostratus himself, applied the same tactics of carefully covering the very essence of things, which holds true for his method as well, being, though different in form, intrinsically the same as the one successfully used by the author of the biographies of the sophists. Instead of allusions, omissions and enigmatical arrangement of the material, we have now to deal with something irresistibly reminiscent of Socrates’ own approach as described in Plato’s early dialogues and graphically characterized by its author as both drunkenness of speech (Lys., 222b) and dizziness (Lys., 216c), blurring his eyes and, to put it with Krumbacher (1897: 764/5), bringing about the devil’s tattoo in both his own and his audience’s ears\(^{14}\), at the very moment when a certain ethical notion is being equated with its very opposite as a result of his (i.e. Socrates’) striving to give it a universalistic definition, as testified by one of his five attempts made in Lysis (213a) with the aim to determine the nature of love in which the last mentioned phenomenon was paradoxically identified with hate itself. We feel the same kind of both dizziness and the devil’s tattoo in our ears when we find out that the terms philosophy and sophistic, otherwise denoting opposite, contrasting phenomena, were alternately used by Isocrates in the self-same meaning\(^{15}\), even in one and the same context in his main work Antidosis\(^{16}\), where his own judicial procedure was, moreover, pronouncedly identified with that of Socrates (15; 27), as a result of which it was at first glance in no way possible to ascertain where philosophy ends and where sophistic begins and what it is that can be regarded as genuinely philosophical in a purely sophistical subject matter, as was just the case with the already mentioned pictorial representation of the centaur’s dual natures as described in Philostratus’ Imagines.

Of the strenuous effort made by Isocrates to mystify the phenomenon of sophistic clearly speaks the fact that the mentioned term was even used by him in Antidosis to denote the teachings of the Ionian philosophers (268) as

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\(^{14}\)Referred to the style of Makrembolites’ novel.

\(^{15}\)Cf. 209 (e.,k katafrone-n tÁj filosof...aj); 215 (toÝj oÜ katafronoàntaj mén tÁj filosof...aj, polÝ dç pikrÒteron kathgoroàntaj aÚtÁj), 220 (Oti soísti misqÕj k£llistÔj Tªmésti ka’ mígstojoj), 243 (dieyemisnÌoí tÁj filosof...aj).

\(^{16}\)Cf. 168 (tÁj koinÁj tÁj per’ toÝj soístj diabolÁj ÊpolàUsw); 170 (t-n te filosof...an Tªmì k pollín ononomizon Tªmpide...xein ed...kwj diabebhlµnhn), 206 (tí to...nun filosof...v fan»setai ka’ toátô sumbëbhköj), 209 (e.,kÔtwj ¨n xøpante Δvºn Ygnoian qaumëseian tin tolµntwn oÚtwj e.,k katafrone-n tÁj filosof...aj). The fact that the term philosophy is more frequently used than sophistic clearly speaks of the nature of Isocrates’ art.
well as those of the Seven Sages (235) and Solon himself (313), which in itself further complicated every attempt at drawing any meaningful line of demarcation between philosophy and sophistic as far as his oeuvre is concerned. It turned out that the only possible answer to this curious game of hide-and-seek should be based on the assumption that every author, even against his will, reveals the elements of self-interpretation. It was this that actually happened to Isocrates despite the fact that he was desperately trying to remove all traces leading up to the basic postulates of his poetics, his worldview and his political mission. After doing a close reading of Antidosis we got the impression that he “betrayed” himself against his will not only once but all three times, thus providing a precious opportunity for us to have an insight as to what his understanding of the sophistic actually was and how much it differed from that of Dio so as to be able to view a controversial phenomenon of the late Greek renaissance in a new light.

What can now with all certainty be stated is that Philostratus’ enigmatic formulation appearing in the prologue to his Lives of the Sophists, namely philosophésants en dixei tou sophsteúsai, has its origins in Antidosis, more precisely in the mentioned passages in which philosophy and sophistic were pronouncedly equated with each other. If we take into account Dio’s disparaging attitude towards the exponents of the ancient sophistic in dealing with whom he used a whole series of scornful and mocking qualifiers, we are driven to the conclusion that at a superficial level, at least, there is a breach of continuity on a line starting from Isocrates, leading up further to Philostratus and ending with Eunapius. To make things even worse, we have in Dio’s case to also take into account the interplay between reality and illusion manifesting itself, unlike the play we face in Isocrates and Philostratus’ work, in the enigmatic form of at first glance irreconcilable dichotomies in his own oeuvre, with the preliminary remark that, despite all of it, the key postulates of Dio’s poetics essentially fit in the trend referred to above, as shall be seen shortly.

Before examining more closely the question of the ontological aspect of Dio’s poetics characterized by the above-mentioned dichotomies, we have to go back yet again to briefly address the issue of the three mentioned instances in which Isocrates, against his own will, “betrayed” the elements of his poetics. The instances are all the more important as they reveal a mighty force standing behind and setting in motion all the spiritual aspirations over the entire time period of the late Greek renaissance. Even more than that, this mighty driving force will open up new perspectives for us by hinting at the entire strategic, state-building project standing right behind it, namely a project based on a legend on which its realisation in practise will, as shall be seen shortly, essentially depend, as testified by Eunapius’ Lives.

In one and the same narrow context in Antidosis (209-211), we come across the three key instances of self-interpretation which more than eloquently speak of not only Isocrates’ understanding of his own art, but also of the
relationship between his oratory and the kindred spiritual phenomena such as
the ancient sophistic and forensic oratory. What first springs to mind is the
fact that Isocrates, just like Philostratus himself, looks upon the ancient and
the new, i.e. his own, sophistic as the same phenomena, with the only
differences between them being in his view reduced to levels and methods,
which in itself, unlike what was advocated by Dio, can be regarded as an
attempt aimed at mitigating the dichotomies. It is in the context just referred
to that we encounter the three key terms such as philoponía, epiméleia and
kalokagathía used by Isocrates to denote both the nature and the aim of his
method being now compared to the extremely painful training of the intellect
(209: philoponía; phronéseos áskesis) continuously undergone by would-be
adepts of rhetoric under his own supervision aimed at acquiring full
awareness of what is called epiméleia (210/211)17 and thus creating favourable
conditions for implanting as easily as possible noble character traits, now
equated with kalokagathía (220)18, in the souls of his adepts, with the method
itself, in keeping with what has been said about Isocrates’ understanding of
sophistic, being first characterized as philosophical (philoponía) and almost
immediately thereafter as sophistical (kalokagathía).

We have thus come into possession of three key coordinates which it was
not that difficult to supplement with other ones having great associative
potential and, just due to that, being capable of additionally clarifying both
Isocrates’ understanding of the sophistic and the profound, philosophical
dimension of his own method, which can explain a frequent appearance of the
term philosophy in his characterisations of his own art.

How important this narrow context with its three precious coordinates
was for our objectives speaks the fact that we encounter the other three
scattered in both the introductory and concluding pasasges from Antidosis.
The formulation appearing in the introductory passages from the mentioned
work, in which Isocrates draws a clear-cut line of demarcation between his art
and that of his rivals, with the former handling lofty topics (3), and glorifying
the power of philosophy (10) unlike the latter representing in his view all too
easy mental juggling (teratologíai)19 otherwise closely associated with soft

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17Industry or suitable training.
18The adjective kaloi kai agathoi, translated by C. Wright as honorable, is used by
Isocrates, instead of the mentioned nominal form, to be precise.
19284 - 285: ... toYj de tìn mìn enagkà...wn emeloàntaj, t'j dé tìn palaiìn sofistìn
teratolog...aj égagíntaj filosofei fasin, ell' ou toYj t' toiaàta maqçíntaj ka' 
meletíntaj 284 in ka' tìn òdion oíkon ka' t' koin' t' t' Áj p'òlew j kalij dioikçousi, inper
>neka ka' ponhtíon ka' filosofhtíon ka' pûnta práktíon TMS...n. This proves the fact
that in Isocrates' time sophistic and philosophy were identified with each other and
that Isocrates' understanding of the sophistic was essentially determined by the legend
as depicted in Xenophon's Memorabilia (cf. especially 2, 7, 1; 2, 7-10; 3, 1-5).
living and pleasures of all kinds, could rightly be regarded as such a coordinate.

The remaining two formulations, in which Isocrates compares his own method and style with both gymnastics and music, could also rightly be regarded as coordinates in so far as they give us the answer as to what profound philosophy it is that pervades his poetical principles. The first of the mentioned coordinates could be considered a clear reflection of the famous passage from Plato’s *Gorgias*, with the analogy being therein drawn between culinary art and rhetoric, on the one side, and gymnastics and legislature (464b; 465b), on the other, as counterfeiting and genuine disciplines associated with the mind and body respectively, so that Isocrates’ pronounced identification of his own art with gymnastics could *a posteriori* be regarded not only as a sign of his faithfulness to the principles of the Platonic philosophy, but also as a reflection of his ambition to confer state-building characteristics on his own art (legislature). This gains in importance all the more as we take into account the fact that the above-mentioned analogy, in which all too easy mental juggling as a method of Isocrates’ rivals was equated with a way of living characterized by pleasures of all kinds, is essentially based on Socrates’ famous characterisation of the sophistical rhetoric in *Gorgias* as a certain habituation producing nothing more than a kind of gratitude and pleasure (462c: εὐριτῶς τινα ἔνθισεν κα’ ἀδιαφόρημα ἐπεργάσαι...αι). The coordinate cited as the last among those appearing in the additional group, namely music, moves us even closer to our goal such as an accurate determination of Isocrates’ art, if we take into consideration the fact that it is in the prologue to *Phaedo* (61a) that Socrates himself identifies his own way of acting with music, a prologue in which he is represented as having recourse to both the poetical paraphrase of a comical prose model, such as Aesop’s fables, and the composition of the sublime hymn to Apollo with the aim to imprint the indelible, daemonic mark on his entire life by amalgamating the sublime and the comical in his last day. It is in the passage just referred to that both the philosophy and the paraphrase are characterized as music, with the former being identified with the sublime one unlike the latter regarded as its popular counterpart. We must call on yet another coordinate from the first group,
namely epiméléia, for help so as to be able to clearly see of what importance
Isocrates' identification of his own art with music was for his literary activity.

Epiméléia itself represents, along with sophia, the crucial term of Socrates'
political testament given in the form of a rough draft in Alcibiades in which
both of them assume characteristics of the daemonic forces capable of
guaranteeing the victory in any future clashes between the Greek world and
its barbarian surrounding, so that it is quite reasonable to assume that what
Isocrates had in mind was, among other things, such a state-building and
strategic aspect of epiméléia. This assumption seems to be well founded all the
more as epiméléia also acquires the features of the key word in Xenophon's
Memorabilia, with sophia now giving its place to a more concrete term, such as
egkráteia (continence), around which as a specific axis all other central
principles of Socrates' philosophy are presented as revolving in the work just
referred to.

It could be said that in Xenophon egkráteia became the quintessence of
wisdom in so far as it only leads up to contemplating the intelligible world
and what is Good in things themselves as well as to classifying the last
mentioned ones into both genera and groups and the possibility closely
connected with it, such as continuously choosing Good and avoiding Evil in
one's own activity (4, 5, 11–12). All of this carries more weight if we take into
account that Memorabilia could be regarded as a specific legend of Socrates, as
shown by the fact that Socrates is represented in it not only as a connoisseur of
the intelligible world of ideas but also as an expert in almost all practical
disciplines such as military art (3, 1 – 5), home economics (2, 7 - 2, 8), house-
keeping (2, 9 – 2, 10), doing sustainable business and account-keeping (2, 8),
with his solidarity with all the members of the community excelling in its
importance and going so far as to induce him to not only help others with his
advice, but also to carry like an athlete their own burden on his back (2, 7, 1:

crêdê toa βερουμεταδιδοναι τοιῷ λοι). With this we gained a deeper perspective on Isocrates' poetics which
turned out to almost perfectly fit into the spirit of both Socrates' political
testament in Alcibiades and Xenophon's Memorabilia as a legend of Socrates
launched in the most suitable moment for applying the mentioned testament's
key ideas in practice. Thus we can see the stylistic and ideational timeline
starting from Isocrates and leading up to Philostratus essentially extended in
both directions, forwards and backwards, with both Socrates' political
testament and Xenophon's legend of Socrates standing at its beginning, a

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22It deserves to be mentioned in this context that Socrates is also represented by
Xenophon as the connoisseur of the entire domain of fine and plastic arts in his
conversations with the painter Parrhasius (3, 10, 2) and the sculptor Cleitus (3, 10, 5),
something that, along with the principles of the new rhetoric outlined in Phaedrus
(266b), served as an initial basis for the creation of the literary concept in the period of
the Second Sophistic and later epochs.
legend that has ended up becoming manifest in a later time period covered by
Eunapius’ Lives, whose protagonists were striving to imitate Socrates’ life
down to the last detail with the aim to surpass, among other things, their
master’s legendary achievement during his military episode in ice-cold
Potideia. Thus what was carefully shrouded in mystery over the time period
of nearly seven centuries and only enigmatically announced was publicly
made almost known at the very end of Greek intellectual history, more
precisely in Eunapius’ Lives, and the reason therefore was not so much the
apparent external threat posed by the barbarian invasion as a very dangerous,
universalistic-oriented enemy force such as Christian religion, something
that forced dying paganism to assign a role of the last bulwark of defence to
Socratic, or rather Platonic, philosophy in its bitter struggle for preserving its
own dearly beloved exclusiveness.

Dichotomies within Dio’s oeuvre and the Siren singing on the tomb
of Isocrates

We now turn briefly to the issue of Dio’s attitudes towards the sophistic
which at first sight don’t fit into the mentioned trend as expressed in the
writings of the current’s three major exponents such as Isocrates, Philostratus
and Eunapius. The sharp tones of Dio’s polemics directed at the sophists and
their activity speak more than anything else for the validity of our statement, a
polemics in which Dio spares no effort and, so to speak, no word to label the
exponents of the mentioned intellectual current in his fourth discourse on
kingship as “ignorants” (28), “tricky fellows” (32), “men attracting only
simpletons” (35), “lecherous eunuchs” (35) and “miserable creatures” (38) so
as to discredit them altogether by presenting them as a dangerous, unruly and
subversive element. Not even such a tone of disparagement was quite
sufficient for Dio to express all his contempt for the exponents of such
educational aspirations, so that he felt the need to have recourse to Socrates’
favourite habit of drawing analogies with the mythical and animal world,
with the sophist now being associated not only with the hybrid race of the
centaurs (131) as a monstrous brood sprung from Ixion’s embrace of a dark
and dismal cloud but also with the young, untrained and unruly dogs
misleading others more experienced in hunting by both barking at random
and behaving as if they knew the scent and saw the prey thus ending up

23Cf. 482 (Aedesius), 492 (Prohaeresius), 500 (Chrysanthius).
25As an instance of this can be cited the demolition of the temple of Serapis at Canobus
in the Nile Delta, as depicted by Eunapius (472).
deceiving the hunters and becoming, like their human analogon, the very symbol of ignorance and inexperience (34).

Now the key question is being raised as to which of the two sophistics is the subject of his invective, the ancient or the new one, i.e. that of the Isocratic type? If we start from the fact that in Dio’s two fairly brief “essays” on Homer and Socrates (or. 44, 45) – being otherwise of great importance for understanding his literary-aesthetical principles – it was the exponents of the ancient sophistic that were placed in a negative light, and then, in keeping with it, assume that they themselves were the subject of his censure, in that case his aspiration to cross swords with the exponents of the intellectual current, with hardly visible, weakly sparks still smouldering in its legacy, having a long time ago lost its actuality, would have seemed a little bit anachronistic. But if we, on the other hand, assume that in the first century AD the sparks smouldering in the ashes of the ancient sophistic were of such an intensity that they might have posed a challenge for Dio’s own conception of rhetoric, then his tirades against sophists could be regarded only as a consequence of his disagreement with Isocrates’ concept of the new sophistic, which was elastic enough to include, aside from purely philosophical legacy, also that of the ancient sophistic, something to which he was not at all inclined26. Thus we arrived at the logical conclusion that Dio’s tirades had been directed at his contemporaries striving to apply in their own writings the concepts of the old sophistic despite the fact that they were not well grounded in philosophy, something that can rightly be regarded as calling into question Isocrates and by the same token Philostratus’ conception of the sophistic, which is why Dio was classed, as already seen, among philosophers27 in Philostratus’ Lives.

In the preceding sections we have argued that, despite all, Dio’s attitudes fitted into the new concept of sophistic advocated by Isocrates, and now we shall see the reason therefore. The answer will be given by Dio’s two already mentioned fairly brief “essays” extolling Socrates’ style (or. 44) and giving evidence of close affinities between Homer and Socrates (or. 45). The former culminates in the curious paradox that “the words of Socrates, for some

26Similar attitudes towards the sophists of his own time were also taken by Dio’s contemporary Plutarch Aud., 43f, 48d, where the exponents of the mentioned intellectual current are identified with the popular lecturers or superficial persons bent on acquiring mere information respectively, which allow us to conclude that what Dio had in mind was just this kind of knowledge.

27This can also be explained by the lack of enigma in the writings of Dio’s maturity, something that holds true for Lucian as well, who was not even mentioned in Philostratus’ register of the sophists, most likely owing to the fact that, excepting Piscator, De domo and Prometheus es in verbis, he made publicly known what the key elements of his poetics were in his literary canons appearing in De saltatione, Lexiphanes and Imagines.
strange reason, still endure and will endure for all time, though he himself did not write or leave behind him either a treatise or a will” (54, 4)\(^2\), unlike the writings of the sophists, which, despite the fact that they won such admiration and were carefully written down, nothing had remained but their name alone, something that in Dio’s view can be explained by their authors’ base motives of making money and pleasing simpletons and fools (54, 1 – 2). In the second-mentioned “essay” in which close affinities between Homer and Socrates are advocated\(^2\), we come across a magic formula which was destined to be most carefully masked during the whole time period in which the Second Sophistic existed as an intellectual current, and what it is all about is the amalgamation of Homeric imagery and the Socratic, or rather Platonic, concept, something that can be characterized as a two-way process, be it that the Platonic concept ended up being condensed and reduced to the form of a Homeric image or that the Homeric image was additionally elaborated so as to assume characteristics of the Platonic concept itself.

In the second-mentioned “essay” Dio himself disproves the arguments first set forth by both Philostratus and Synesius and subsequently used by the scholars in an attempt to justify introducing the dichotomies in his own oeuvre, something that went largely unnoticed in the course of the research work carried out so far. Striking similarities between Homer and Socrates are, in Dio’s view, perfectly exemplified by the seemingly trivial analogies with starlings, daws, locusts, a firebrand, ashes, beans and chickpeas, being, just due to their educational function, at least of the same, if not even greater importance in Homer’s work as the similes with the almighty creatures of both the wild life and myth, such as lions and eagles or Scyllas and Cyclopes (55, 10), something that, aside from fusing the myth, history and fable\(^3\) with each other (55, 10), also holds true for Socrates’ living word characterized by an amazing mixture of the serious and the laughable (45, 11). We can with good reason assume that these two brief “essays” on Homer and Socrates represent the author’s self-interpretation in so far as Dio, following an example already set by Socrates, speaks about his own poetics in a roundabout way by expounding his views on the mentioned authors’ stylistic features\(^3\). Synesius himself seems to have consciously overlooked these two instances of Dio’s self-interpretation so as to be in a position to fabricate the

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\(^2\)English version of this and all of the following passages is borrowed from Lamar Crosby’s translation of Dio’s discourses (LCL).

\(^3\)Striking similarities between Socrates and Homer are, in the author’s view (55, 9), expressed by the fact that “they both were devoted to the same ends and spoke about the same things” through different media such as those of verse and prose.

\(^3\)The fable is, as it seems, implicitly present in Dio’s formulation.

\(^3\)A. Brancacci (1992: 3316) uses the term lògos Sokratikós in order to prove his theory of Dio’s being inspired by the reflexion which Socrates’ living word found in Antisthenes.
thesis according to which Dio was a sophist in his early period\(^{32}\), only to recant these youthful beliefs and become a philosopher in the years of his maturity by handling what was usually classed among purely rhetorical subjects no longer as a rhetorician but rather like a statesman (Lamar Crosby 1951: 372). In keeping with what has been said so far, we can rightly assume that Dio handled even the trivial topics such as encomia on gnat, parrot\(^{33}\) and hair like a statesman, as can be inferred from the fact that the last mentioned one, otherwise preserved in Synesius’ own encomion on baldness, might be characterized as a brief “essay” on the cultural phenomenon, such as wearing long hair by Spartan youth, rather than a sophistical writing, at least judging by the deep impression Synesius was under while reading it time and again. What Synesius seems to have been attracted to was much rather Dio’s writings dealing with the minor topics than his state-building discourses just due to the former’s allusive and enigmatic features, which in itself points toward the fact that in the period of the Second Sophistic both the enigmatic and the allusive were of the same, if not greater, importance as the writings possessing state-building characteristics. The absence of *enigma* in the writings of Dio’s maturity as well as his irreconcilable attitudes towards the ancient sophist was, as already seen, the main reason for which Dio was classed among philosophers in Philostratus’ *Lives*.

The symbol pregnant with profound meaning we encounter at the very beginning of Philostratus’ brief account of Isocrates’ style and activity speaks, as it seems, more than anything else about what the Second Sophistic actually is. What it is all about is the sculpture of the Siren standing on the tomb of Isocrates with her pose being that of one singing. What at first glance seems to be a little bit odd in it is the fact that the Siren is associated with Isocrates if we take into account the emblematic character of the scenes in the introductory passages from Alcibiades’ discourse in the *Symposium* (215e) where Socrates’ speech is pronouncedly compared not only to the song of the Sirens but also to the rhythms of the corybantic élan\(^{34}\), with Alcibiades being by his own admission unable to hold back his tears gushing forth at the sound of Socrates’ speech more profusely than is the case with Corybants when in a state of wild fanaticism. If we take into account another fact as well, such as that we encounter in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, where Socrates’ art of speaking was all too pronouncedly compared to the potions (*philtra*), spells (*epodai*) and magical wheels, i.e. *iynges* (3, 11, 16 - 17) as well as, though implicitly, to the song of


\(^{33}\) Cf. Lamar Crosby (1951: 370): ... fhs...(sc. Philostratus) ... sofistoà g’r einai mhđè toÚtwn Øperide-ô.

\(^{34}\) Socrates himself uses the terms *sygkorybantión* and *synbakcheión* in *Phaedrus* (228b and 234d respectively) to describe his passion for the discourses dealing with love and friendship.
the Sirens (2, 6, 16), we would be tempted to regard Philostratus’ attempt at ascribing one author’s emblematic stylistic features to another as an utterly uninvinent one. But yet again appearance was deceptive.

In order to be able to ascertain what exactly it is that the Siren singing on the tomb of Isocrates symbolizes, we must yet again take into account the enigmatic arrangement of the biographical material in the introductory passages from Philostratus’ Lives, namely passages that are, as already seen, characterized by telling ellipses, omissions and every kind of concealment. The mutual substitution of the places occupied by Isocrates and Aeschines within the brief catalogue of the sophists of an earlier period could be regarded as the most flagrant case of concealment, a substitution that seems to have been made with the aim to give the false impression of Aeschines as being the founder of the intellectual current known as the Second Sophistic.

The fact itself that Philostratus subtly brings Isocrates’ oratory into close connection with the dance by using for his eloquence the term krótos (503), previously applied exclusively to Socrates’ living and breathing word, helps getting closer to the goal, i.e. the solution to the enigma. It is now quite clear that what it is all about here is the initial stage in an undertaking aimed at applying the terms of Socrates’ political testament in practise, a stage in which the main role was assigned to both Xenophon, as Socrates’ disciple, and Isocrates, as the rhetorician on whom Socrates (Phaedr. 279a-b) set his hopes when it comes to the transformation of the rhetoric from a beguiling and counterfeiting art and habitude to the discipline of state-building importance, with both launching the legend of Socrates (Xenophon) and providing features to one’s own style so as to make it, at least from afar, resemble the song of the Sirens (Isocrates), being the necessary prerequisites for such a curious undertaking.

The sculpture of the Siren singing on the tomb of Isocrates turned out quite unexpectedly to be a specific symbol of the new sophistic, which was thus far, first of all thanks to Philostratus, erroneously associated with the old one, something that was, among other things, reflected in Rohde’s (19143) classical work with far-reaching negative consequences for the research work carried out so far35. Thus we are in a position to rectify Philostratus’ basically correct statement according to which the new sophistic does not bring something new, in so far as we now know almost for certain that its mission was to propagate not sophistical but rather Socratic legacy, including that of style and method, and, above all, to imitate his living and breathing word.

35Especially the famous chapter Die griechische Sophistik der Kaiserzeit wrongly believed to be the only part of his monograph having stood the test of time. None other than Reardon’s monograph (1971) can be adduced as a telling example of just how fatal relying on the representation of the phenomenon in Rohde was.
The beauty of the enigma in Eunapius

The enigma as a stylistic feature speaks more than anything else to the extent of the interrelatedness of Philostratus and Eunapius’ Lives, with the consequence that any attempt of disregarding the testimonies appearing in anyone of the above mentioned works had to end up being fatal, as testified by the case of Rohde (1914: 386) himself who, due to his methodological shortcomings, ignored Eunapius’ writing because of its alleged barbarian nature. As distinguished from Philostratus in whose Lives we come across the enigma applied to a broader plan, as expressed in the general composition of his work, arrangement of the bibliographical material and ellipses, the mentioned stylistic feature becomes even more intriguing in Eunapius’ work, since it is essentially based on the additional elaboration of detail and motifs borrowed from his models. To tell the truth, Eunapius was forced to adopt this kind of approach just due to the fact that the shroud of mysteries surrounding the Second Sophistic from its very inception as an intellectual current had to be unwrapped under pressure of events, such as the irrepressible penetration of the Christian religion into the Greek living space, so that he was left with the only path to follow consisting in elaborating the detail in the pattern so as to make it possible for it to assume magical and mystical features. Two episodes from Iamblichus’ life as depicted by Eunapius (458-459) speak volumes about the mentioned author’s use of enigma assuming truly magical characteristics, as exemplified by what follows.

What it is all about in both instances is Iamblichus’ divinatory powers, which in itself could be regarded as the author’s leaning on Xenophon’s Memorabilia (1, 4, 17-18) in which Socrates is represented as pronouncedly advocating the importance of divination in the life of both the individual and the society. What is more, both episodes from Iamblichus’ life as narrated by Eunapius are closely connected with Socrates himself, so that it could be rightly affirmed that Iamblichus and, by the same token, Eunapius follows after Socrates and walks in his footsteps as if he were a god in full accordance with his famous formulation in Phaedrus (266b-c) essentially based on a Homeric line (Od., 5, 193).

What the first-mentioned episode makes evident is the impression of Iamblichus’ striving to resemble Socrates, since he is represented as suddenly being lost in thought with his voice cut off and his eyes steadily fixed on the ground in the midst of his conversation with his disciples returning to the city after the sacrificial rites had been duly performed in one of his suburban villas, something that was followed by his immediate suggestion to his friends to go by another road because the dead body had lately been carried along.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{36}}\text{En te tin' \textsuperscript{1}g\textgreek{swma}i dunat\textgreeksmall{O}n e,\textgreek{r} en ka' \textsuperscript{TM}p\textgreek{p}oll\textgreek{e} \textsuperscript{2}p\textgreek{e}fuk\textgreek{o}q\textgreek{D}r\textgreek{O}n, to\textgreek{a}t\textgreek{a}n di\textgreek{e}kw k\textgreek{a}\textgreek{t}\textgreek{O}p\textgreek{i}sq\textgreek{e} met' \textsuperscript{3}\textgreek{e}nion \textgreek{e}st\textgreek{e} q\textgreek{e}o\textgreek{o}.\]
that way, in which most of his disciples were unwilling to believe and continued to go by the same road, only to be afterwards convinced of the truthfulness of his words by inquiring of those whom they encountered coming back from the funeral. Of the effective elaboration of the detail borrowed from the pattern clearly speaks the transposition of the motif of Socrates’ going into ecstasy and becoming immovable (174d – 175c) immediately before his arrival at the banquet going on in Agathon’s house to a diametrically opposed context such as a funeral, a method we come often across in Greek authors. Paradoxically enough, what closely connects both episodes in Iamblichus’ life is none other than Agathon himself. We shall now see the reason therefore.

In the second episode Iamblichus’ theurgical powers are depicted in the milieu of warm baths in Gadara (459) comprising, among other things, two hot springs from the depth of which he called forth one after another two boys named Eros and Anteros by uttering a brief summons, with the former being represented as a white-skinned lad with golden locks and shining breast, unlike the latter, whose “hair was darker and fell loose in the sun”. We can rightly assume that the breast of Anteros was of the same nuance as his hair, i.e. dark, as a consequence of his long exposure to the sun, something that was left unsaid by Eunapius. What we are dealing with here is both a hardly perceptible visualisation of the key message from Agathon’s discourse in the Symposium - in which Eros is represented as a being of fit proportion (196a) and, like water, pliant of form and therefore able to fold himself about every man in every way, as a result of which he steals in and out of every soul so secretly, after previously enchanting it - and an amalgamation of the concepts of Eros’ dual nature, as expressed in Pausanias’ (180c-e) and, above all, Socrates’ discourse in the Symposium (203b-e). The episode itself ends in an amazing way with both Eros and Anteros embracing Iamblichus and clinging to him as though he were their real father, something that of itself speaks in a roundabout way about the so called sophists’ inner and sentimental attachment to the legend of Socrates.

Conclusion

On the basis of evidence provided, aside from Philostratus and Eunapius’ Lives, by Xenophon, Isocrates and Dio Chrysostom, we can see that, contrary

(19) C. Wright regards it as an echo of Phaedo 64b.
(20) Cf. among other works Philostr., Im. 2, 10 (Kassandra), modeled on Od. 11, 472 ff., the introductory scene from Heliodorus’ novel, Lucian’s satirical writing The Corousal or the Lapiths as well as the frequent turning of what is called the symposium of happiness into one of misfortune in Prodromos’ novel (8, 232-241; 8, 391-396; 8, 470-479; 9, 390 – 394).
to all expectations, the Second Sophistic was closely connected not so much with the rhetoric as with the philosophy itself, namely with the legend of Socrates, no matter what its exponents say of the phenomenon in their attempts to mask the essence of things. We can also see how the legend of Socrates gradually developed from the central principles of the political testament in Alcibiades by first manifesting itself in a hidden, enigmatic manner in the initial period of the Second Sophistic roughly coinciding with the two first centuries AD, with the entire shroud of mysteries surrounding it for centuries being finally unwrapped under pressure of events, such as the irrepressible penetration of the Christian religion into the Greek living space in the last period of the Second Sophistic covered by Eunapius’ Lives. In the biographies of the sophists the enigma itself had, aside from a purely political, strategic function, a poetical one as well, consisting in giving the historical and biographical facts a mystical, magical character. It could be said that the enigma in Eunapius and, above all, Philostratus’ work plays almost the same role as does myth in Herodotus’ historical work, in so far as only the skillful use of the mentioned stylistic device might confer an aura of magic to the scarce material being at the disposal of the authors. Of the method used by the biographers more than anything else speaks what Philostratus (564) says about the style of Herodes Atticus comparing it to “the gold dust shining beneath the waters of a silvery eddying river”.

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