



Dio Chrysostom's *Euboicus* as a rejection of Greco-Roman urban civilization¹

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Abstract: Dio Chrysostom's *Euboicus* presents a unique case-study of a divergent voice that disrupts the rather smooth discourse of the urban dimensions of the Second Sophistic. The author, having experienced a rather turbulent period of life, during Domitian's reign and observed alternative ways of life, unfamiliar with the Greek and Roman examples, produced a manifesto of a new view of social living. The ideas and examples presented in the aforementioned work rather reject some of the fundamental social principles of urban living during Classical Antiquity. The extent that Dio was a visionary of social change or a plain reactionary as a result of his personal calamities remains unclear. However, his treatise, describing a remote community in mountainous Euboea, consists not only of a call to a retreat to a more natural and 'primitivistic' way of life, but also includes a sharp criticism of the dominant problems of a Greek city during the imperial era. Through his reflection on such issues, Dio, appeared to have reached the fringes of civil disobedience, inspired by cultural otherness and the resistance to the monolithic Greek and Roman social norms.

Keywords: Dio Chrysostom, Euboean Discourse, Rome, Greek city, Primitivism, Isolationism, Urban Crisis, Hunter-Gatherers

Encountering Dio of Prusa we deal with a paradox, considering the work of a Greek author from the late first/early second centuries AD who defied the dominant political and social norms of his time as well as the urban model of living while this was at its peak and searched for an alternative, rejecting everything that consisted so far, the cultural and social values of Hellenism and *Romanitas* by indicating a way of life rather alien to the classical Greek and Roman mind. Yet that same person, despite his rather awkward attitude found himself close to the supreme source of the Roman *auctoritas* and tasted many of its aspects, having been

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banished by one emperor, but later helping to elevate another and by being an advisor of a third one about the ideals of Kingship are only indicatives of a life of extremes.

Being born in 40 AD, in the Bithynian city of Prusa from an eminent family of landowners and benefactors, Dio moved to Rome at some point in the reign of Vespasian and associated with members of the Flavian family.² He appeared to have a rather hostile attitude against philosophy as his early treatise *Against the Philosophers* (*Κατὰ τῶν Φιλοσόφων*) reveals but while staying in the Eternal City he ‘converted’ to Stoicism under the influence of Musonius Rufus.³ He seemed to have remained in Rome after Vespasian’s edict for the banishment of philosophers (71) and must have been on good terms with Titus and certainly remained around until 82 when Domitian, having been criticized by the sophist, sent him into exile, prohibiting ever to return to Italy or to his native Bithynia.⁴ From then on, Dio, like his contemporary Tacitus, being unlucky enough to experience the reign of Domitian, shared a rather pessimistic view on the orientation of public matters. Having consulted the oracle of Delphi, Dio dressed as a beggar, and being forbidden from having access to the resources of his property had no choice but to travel, wandering from place to place and sustaining himself by manual agricultural labor.⁵ The only objects of his previous life that carried with him were a copy of Plato’s *Phaedo* (*Φαίδων*) discourse and Demosthenes’s oration *On the False Embassy* (*Περὶ τῆς παραπρεσβείας*) upon which he was constantly reflecting. At some point he reached Viminacium, the fortified provincial capital of *Moesia Superior*, aiming to reach the land of the *Getae* in order to compose a *History* of the Goths but the Dacian wars of Domitian prevented him from fulfilling his target. When the news of the emperor’s murder reached the legions’ camp where the *VII Claudia* and the *IV Flavia Felix* were stationed, Dio was present, conducting most probably manual labor on the site. Amid this liquid atmosphere and with the soldiers only a step away from open rebellion, the orator captured the soldiers’ attention and denounced the regime of Domitian (a rather unwise move in front of an army which adored the recently deceased emperor) and persuaded the troops not to rebel against the decision of the Senate to elevate Marcus Cocceius Nerva to the imperial rank (96). Later that year, within the friendly atmosphere of the new state of political affairs, he travelled to Olympia, where he delivered a speech before departing for Rome where he was kindly received by Nerva, who was more than grateful for Dio’s contribution at a crucial moment to the much-desired *Concordia Exercituum*. Nerva’s successor, Trajan, held Dio in high esteem and their friendship can be confirmed the latter accompanying the emperor on his triumphant chariot upon his return to Rome from the victorious Dacian campaign of 102 AD. Trajan appears to have been captivated by Dio’s eloquence, as Philostratus tries to convince us by preserving a famous comment attributed to the emperor (*Τί μὲν λέγεις οὐκ οἶδα, φιλῶ δέ σε ὡς ἑμαυτόν*).⁶ The orator returned this sympathy by dedicating to him his four treatises *On Kingship* (*Περὶ Βασιλείας*). The Bithynian sophist travelled and delivered at least seventy-seven speeches in various cities of the Greek World among them Athens, Alexandria, Tarsus and of course his native Prusa where he lived during the last part of his life initiating an

² See H. Sidebottom, ‘Dio of Prussa and the Flavian Dynasty’, *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (1996), pp. 447-456, p. 447.

³ See J. L. Moles, ‘The Career and Conversion of Dio Chrysostom’, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 98 (1978), pp. 79-100, p. 79.

⁴ See Dio, *Third Discourse on Kingship*, 13.

⁵ See Dio, *The Thirteenth Discourse: In Athens, about his Banishment*, 9

⁶ See Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, 488.

extensive building project in his hometown like his father and grandfather did and apparently bringing the province of Bithynia to a state of bankruptcy. Dio could not give an account of the expenditures and he faced a lawsuit, which involved him in a complex trial and finally his case was brought before the famous author and governor of Bithynia, Pliny the Younger. The imperial legate treated Dio rather harshly in order to demonstrate that not even the emperor's friends were above the Law and it is in one of Pliny's letters to Trajan that we have the last mention of Dio in 111-112AD.⁷

In order to understand the realities of the first century AD we must observe the evolution of the tensions in Greek literature of the period that preceded. The Greek intellectuals of the last century BC were still preoccupied with the study of the emergence and expansion of the Roman Empire and its penetration to the Greek East. Their perspective was, reasonably, *Universal*, and consequently the scene was dominated by the composition and circulation of 'Universal' Histories, the works of Nicolaus of Damascus, Diodorus Siculus, Poseidonius of Apameia and Polybius of Megalopolis can be classified as such.⁸ The arrival of Rome, however, its stronger presence after the Mithridatic Wars (88-63BC) as well as that Greece became the background of the Roman Civil Wars of the first and second Triumvirates, resulted not only in material disasters but to long-term financial and demographic stagnation if not decline.⁹ The first emperor who paid attention to Greece and treated its symbolic landscape with an antiquarian's reverence was Nero, who publicly declared his enthusiasm by repeating the declaration of the Greek 'Freedom', granting additionally tax-exemption and self-governance.¹⁰ After all, it was only in Greece, where Nero felt appreciated and only the Greeks appeared to have enjoyed his artistic activities and lifestyle, thus consisting the only place where he was literally popular.¹¹ Following his death, the Greek cities, returned this sympathy and devotion by mourning for the deceased emperor (68AD).¹² By the time of the Flavian Dynasty (69-96AD) we have a revived interest and a re-appreciation of the *Polis* as a social organization and as a Greek achievement, partly as a reaction to the intellectual *Universalism* of the previous two centuries. At the same time, there was an increase of regional conflicts between the Greek cities on various issues and it was during those public debates that the orators of the Second Sophistic participated, representing the voice of the elites or intervening on their behalf to the Roman emperor. The escape to the Past however, even in the traditionally considered carefree Antonine era, reveals a rather uncomfortable feeling about the present, a lack of collective orientation and a reflection on the Greek institutions in a rather *apolitical* Age. With the old autonomy gone, the Greek cities could at best demonstrate quarrels that recalled or resembled the old rivalries of the fifth or fourth centuries BC. Such an example was Philostratus's account of the ongoing, during the second century AD, controversy of Athens and Megara regarding the Megarian decree of Pericles (433/32BC). Several of Dio's orations about his native Prusa are dedicated to similar

⁷ See Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae*, X.81

⁸ See A. Momigliano, *Ξένη Σοφία: Τα Όρια του Εξελληνισμού στην Αρχαιότητα* (Athens: Αλεξάνδρεια, 1998), p. 49-88. [*Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization in Antiquity*].

⁹ See U. Kahrstedt, *Das Wirtschaftliche Gesicht Griechenlands in der Kaiserzeit* (Bern: 1954).

¹⁰ See *Inscriptiones Graecae*, W. Dittenberger (ed.), *Inscriptiones Megaridis et Boeotiae*, v. VII (Berlin: Reimer, 1892), n. 2713

¹¹ See Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* V. 7. Also, Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars, Life of Nero*, 25 and Plutarch, *Moralia*, 567F-568A.

¹² See M. Griffin: 'Nachwort: Nero from Zero to Hero', E. Buckley, M. Dinter (ed.), *A Companion to the Neronian Age* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2013), p. 467-480.

issues.¹³

Thus, Greeks were organizing their 'irrational' thoughts regarding the consequences of the abolition of the old civic freedom. The realization of this condition was of course, of paramount importance since the old stereotypical image of material prosperity of the second century fades away if we consider the inner collective failure of nerve in the Greek world. The social and intellectual horizons of this period were described by E. Dodds as the beginning of an *Age of Anxiety* and a prelude to the years of trial of the mid-third century after which the Roman Empire would emerge as a 'New' State of Orwellic Dystopian proportions.¹⁴ This however, as P. Brown and R. Lane Fox revised was an expression of a rather educated skepticism representing a really small fraction of the cities' upper classes.¹⁵ On the contrary, what appear to dominate human relationships was *Anger* rather than *Anxiety*.¹⁶ The works of Galen for instance reveal several cases of the rage and the fury by masters towards slaves and dependent workers who carried the burdens of Gibbon's "Happiest Age of Mankind."¹⁷ To focus however on a few individuals in order to sum up the collective emotions of an Age would be over-simplistic. Nevertheless, we could consider that the gradual detachment of peoples' inner life from an unhappy outer life functioned indeed as a prelude to an *Age of Change*.¹⁸ The figure of Dio Chrysostom emerges within this atmosphere towards which he was extremely critical. The quarrels between the Greek cities of his time, for instance, which were something more like a re-enactment of the glorious Past disgusted Dio, who addressed his audience in the *Second Tarsic Discourse* by saying that 'Athens and Sparta had reasons to contest each other: theirs was a contest for real power and privilege- not yours. You are little more than slaves arguing with other slaves for honor!'.¹⁹ The alternative that he indicated as well as the mirroring of the decline of the Greek cities are most profoundly summarized in his *Euboicus* oration.²⁰ It is a work unique among the Second Sophistic corpus in a sense that it stands as a manifesto of a postclassical primitivism, a praise to the way of life of Hunter-Gatherers and a cry of rejection of the *Polis* ideals. The *Euboian Discourse* must have been delivered at Rome at some point in the later part of Dio's life, perhaps during Nerva's brief reign (96-98AD).

Up to this point, Dio's life may not appear interesting enough as a case-study in an attempt to trace a divergent voice against his contemporary social and cultural norms. After all, his was among the fortunate survivors of his generation to witness what Tacitus celebrated with relief as *beatissimi saeculi lucem ac principem Traianum*.²¹ Even his wanderings, were rather a

¹³ See Bowie, p. 18. Also See R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean world from the second century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 50.

¹⁴ See E. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: some aspects of religious experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

¹⁵ See R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, p. 64-66.

¹⁶ See P. Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 40.

¹⁷ Especially, concerning the 'Age of Anger', the increasing interest of medical treatises of the era regarding emotional management, cf. Plutarch (*On the Control of Anger*), Galen (*De Propriorum Animi Cuiuslibet Affectuum Dignotione et Curatione*) and to some extent, Marcus Aurelius (*Meditations*) stand as indicatives.

¹⁸ R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, p. 66.

¹⁹ See Dio Chrysostom, *Second Tarsic Discourse*, 51. Also See C. Kokkinia, 'The governor's boot and the city's politicians. Greek communities and Rome's representatives under the Empire', *Herrschaftsstrukturen und Herrschaftspraxis: Konzepte, Prinzipien und Strategien der Administration im Römischen Kaiserreich*, Akten der Tagung an der Universität Zürich, 18-20. 10 2004, Akademie Verlag, pp. 180-189, p. 181.

²⁰ See C. Mantas, 'The Transformation of the Classical City in Greece during the Roman Age', in A. Ph. Lagopoulos (ed.) *A History of the Greek City* (BAR International Series: 2009), pp.203-212, p. 204.

²¹ Tacitus, *Agricola*, XLIV.5.

voluntary retirement, as expected, at least according to Philostratus, by the standards of a philosopher's way of life (πάροδον τοῦ ἀνδρὸς φυγὴν μὲν οὐκ ἀξιῶ ὀνομάζειν, ἐπεὶ μὴ προσετάχθη αὐτῷ φυγεῖν, οὐδὲ ἀποδημίαν, ἐπειδὴ τοῦ φανεροῦ ἐξέστη κλεπτῶν ἑαυτὸν ὀφθαλμῶν τε καὶ ὠτῶν καὶ ἄλλα ἐν ἄλλῃ γῆ πράττων δέει τῶν κατὰ τὴν πόλιν τυραννίδων, ὅφ' ὧν ἡλαύνετο φιλοσοφία πᾶσα).²² Even his experience by his life-on-the-move should not be underestimated since it must have provided him with alternatives to the Greco-Roman urban *modus vivendi*. It was during that period when a total intellectual reset must have shaken him, enabling a more innovative approach to social norms he and his contemporaries used to take for granted. Besides, his peculiar retreat, could be interpreted more like a commodity than a punishment.²³ This *fuga solius ad solam* was in its essence a form of philosophical anchoritism which must have been inspired by the consecutive reading and reflection on the platonic dialogues where Socrates is depicted perceiving death as an *apo-demia* (abandonment of the demos, i.e., material reality).²⁴ Thus, Dio, reinvented himself through wandering as it is evident in his *Euboicus* which stands as a discourse of urban *decline* at least from a perspective of someone who took an alternative path.

Given the refutation of his earlier expectations of a philosophical career in Flavian Rome, the inevitable insecurity of a nomadic life as well as his contact with the cultural otherness beyond the *limes imperii* is now wonder that his certainties as a descendant of a Greek elite family were shaken. The aspiring philosopher who abandoned Rome during Domitian's reign was not the same man who was warmly welcomed by Nerva. The mid-time experiences must have been a trauma which might be traced and in his *Euboicus* and classified in two main pillars, consisting of the rejection of urban civilization and its institutions and on the other side, criticizing the social norms and attitude of his contemporaries in public life. Naturally, the fact that Dio belonged to the privileged and benefited of the post-96 era must also be considered. Taking advantage of the new state of affairs, he was able to express himself confidently on issues which would be considered, during Domitian's reign, as a rather ill-balanced initiative.

Approaching the *Euboic* oration we must also notice that it is classified among his later works, in a period of his life when he was anything but content. The death of his wife (at some point before the close of the first decade of the second century) and, later on, of their children which none outlived him were a loss that could not be easily coped with. Additionally, the years after his homecoming were far from smooth regarding his public activities. After leading a Prussian embassy to Rome (98) he was unable to secure the same privileges for his native city as Smyrna enjoined, despite his high connections. Moreover, his rivals, such as Flavius Archippus, must have been multiplied.²⁵

Being disappointed by the *Spirit of the Age*, Dio composed the *Euboic*, which compared to the rest of the preserved orations of his opera, presents a series of peculiarities. It appears that it was not destined to be addressed in a public assembly neither it is structured according to the typical established form of rhetorical discourses.²⁶ It's theme as well as his aggressive and

²² Philostratus, *Lives of the sophists*, I, 488.

²³ Cf. Cicero, *Pro A. Caecina*, 100: *Exsilium enim non supplicium est, sed per fugium portusque supplicii*

²⁴ See Plato, *Theaetetus*, 176.b ([...] to escape is to become like God, so far as this is possible)

²⁵ T. Bekker-Nielsen, *Urban life and local politics in Roman Bithynia. The small world of Dion Chrysostomos*, p. 136.

²⁶ T. Bekker-Nielsen, *Urban life and local politics*, p. 136.

sharp narrative rather indicates the function of a personal *manifesto*.²⁷ The work, stands by itself as a praise of the hunter-gatherer's way of life, dominated by the established literary motive of the *Noble-Savage*.²⁸ The rejection of urban living and the primitivistic tensions in the narrative convinced Philostratus to classify the oration as mere rhetorical exercise.²⁹

The author reflects upon an incident which took place during his early adulthood when traveling from the island of Chios he ended up shipwrecked somewhere along the southeastern shores of Euboea's Coela region.³⁰ While the rest of the survivors decided to remain to the nearby coast, Dio decided to move to the hinterland in order to reach the nearest city (probably that of Carystus). He soon met the Hunter, the central figure in *Euboicus*, who invited the author for dinner in his mountainous settlement.³¹ The sophist praised the hunter's carefree life, far away from the dangerous urban environment dominated public rivalries and conflicts that Dio experienced. During their course, the hunter narrated to the author the origins of his community which consisted of two families who earned their living by hunting and some limited agricultural activity. Initially, they were a group of hired herders who appeared to have (consciously) avoided the world of the cities, living a life of communal ownership in rural areas. After the death of their employer and the confiscation of his property by the Roman authorities, they managed to survive by retreating into isolation and preserving (at least some portion) of their former master's cattle.³²

Although the name of the Roman *basileus* who confiscated the master's property is not given by the author, despite that by the time of the composition, during the first years of Trajan's reign (117-138), he must have felt safe enough to mention it, it appears that there is a deliberate attempt of a negative portrayal of the Roman *auctoritas*, as a factor that oppresses the vulnerable classes, exposed to the turnarounds of a distant ruling power. The herder's flight to the wilderness supposed to be only temporary, it developed however to a permanent and distinct way of life that we could describe it as *Neolithic*. According to the Hunter, the two families' offsprings had no contact with the world of the cities. About a year before Dio's unexpected arrival, the two forefathers passed away and the two lineages, by then in their third generation intermixed. At that pointed he narrated to the author the only the sole contact he experienced with an urban society, when his father was still alive.³³

At some undefined point in the past, one tax collector from a nearby city (Carystus) approached their location asking them to pay for the right of possessing the land which they occupied and moreover he had the jurisdiction to lead them by force to the urban authorities in order to investigate their case. What follows in the narrative is the description of the urban landscape by someone who never encountered it before. Every material element that consisted a cityscape appeared to the Hunter as something extraordinary, the size of the buildings, the surrounding walls and its defensive towers were a spectacle of their own.³⁴

The entrance to the crowded theater, where his case was going to be unfolded, however was a

²⁷ See C. Mantas, 'The Transformation of the Classical City in Greece during the Roman Age', A. P. Lagopoulos (ed.) *A History of the Greek City* (BAR International Series: 2009), pp. 203-212, p. 204.

²⁸ See A. O. Lovejoy, G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1935), pp. 9-14, 99-101.

²⁹ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, I.487.

³⁰ See Dio, *Euboicus*, 2

³¹ Dio, *Euboicus*, 4-5

³² *Euboicus*, 10-13.

³³ *Euboicus*, 21.

³⁴ *Euboicus*, 22-23.

most shocking experience. The audience is portrayed with rather mixed feelings, attracted by plain curiosity for the outcome of that most unusual episode. Soon enough, an orator accused the Hunter's community for a series of illegal acts such as occupation of public land, tax evasion and even shipwreck pillaging in the nearby coast surrounding cape Cafireus.³⁵ The latter charge must have seemed quit credible if we compare the multiple of literary references regarding that particular site, such as that of the local ruler, Nafplius, who set up fires along the coast in order to create confusion to the Achaean fleet returning from Troy so that they might avenge the death of Palamides.³⁶ Furthermore, in a safest historic background, the Persian fleet's crush in Cafireus during the naval battle of Artemision (480 BC) could further strengthen the charges of such kind.

Afterwards, another speaker came on stage, defending the community by declaring that they deserved to be praised instead of being prosecuted.³⁷ By using the Hunter's case as a pretense he proposed a series of economic reforms which would allow the exploitation of approximately two thirds of the unused public land around the city which had been abandoned for long. He also encouraged the audience to follow the community's example by taking advantage of the means of production they already possessed so that they might escape their calamities (*ἀργίας καὶ πενίας*).³⁸ He emphasized to miserable condition and image of their city, dominated by the abandonment and decay of its suburban areas where nature inevitably reclaimed the empty space. In addition, the city center was in no better shape since cattle could be seen grazing around the gymnasium and many of the public monuments could hardly be noticed due to the cultivation of agricultural products in the middle of the agora.³⁹ It was a description of a withering city standing a shadow of its former self with little prospects of recovery.

Continuing his narrative, Dio portrays the Hunter defending his community by reminding the audience that his ancestors were, up to some point, citizens of that town and that they would offer their assistance if the city would be in a case of emergency. Furthermore, declared that the members of his isolated community were willing to abandon their settlement, if the audience demanded so, on the condition that they would provide them accommodation and leaving means.⁴⁰ Concerning the honors that the second speaker proposed as a recompense of their exemplary *modus vivendi*, the Hunter declined any offer of material help and he returned to his fellows with a feeling of relief.

Following that digression, the narrative returns to the present by depicting the Hunter in preparations for the wedding of the community's younger members who, despite their close degree of relationship they were willing to continue the practice in order to avoid any contact with urban population. Dio admired their persistence in preserving their customs and protecting their community in comparison to the complex urban problems and stagnation of

³⁵ *Euboicus*, 27-28.

³⁶ See (Pseudo-) Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, VII. 7-11.

³⁷ *Euboicus*, 33-34.

³⁸ *Euboicus*, 36-37.

³⁹ *Euboicus*, 39. The passage is rather indicative of a reuse of public space in under urgent conditions. Cf. the medieval topography of Rome, especially that of the forum Romanum, which was by then known as *campo vaccino* (pasture), a landscape of urban decay which did not significantly alter until the *Risorgimento* era. Cf. the painting by J. W. Turner (*Modern Rome - Campo Vaccino*, 1839, today in J. P. Getty Museum, Los Angeles). See also, E. Berry, 'Dio Chrysostom the Moral Philosopher', *Greece & Rome*, 30/1 (April 1983), pp. 70-80, p. 74.

⁴⁰ *Euboicus*, 42-49.

their neighboring *Polis*.⁴¹ Beyond the success story of a primitive community however, the author frames an urban community in an existential crisis which may not be an isolated case as it seems. The widening cultural and mental gap between the city and the countryside is manifested by the portrayal of two parallel worlds, hostile to each other, could only be bridged, according to Dio, by a conscious return of the urban masses to a more balanced bucolic living, closer to nature (*γεωργικοῦ, κρηγετικοῦ τε καὶ ποιμενικοῦ βίου διατριβήν*).⁴² This concept which the sophist presents as a remedy for all social calamities and collective stagnation must have appeared as a rather reactionary and provincialist approach compared to the almost contemporary discourse of the famous orator Aelius Aristides who in his *Roman oration* celebrated Roman achievements summarized in the archetype of the eternal city as a global metropolis and common marketplace (*κοινὴν ἀγορὰν*) of the world.⁴³ Beyond this triumphalist spirit of urban living in the shadow of the Roman *Cosmopolis* however, the Hunter's example defies, in both theory and practice, the confidence of Greco-Roman urban civilization, promoting isolationism in contrast to the celebrated freedom of traveling across the Empire. Dio's experience proved that individuals as well as societies could exist without such commodities. This proposed standard of social organization exceeds the limits of plain reaction and rather fits the proportions of primitivistic utopia. Besides, the author clearly informs that his encounter took place during his early period of life, indicating that it was an actual fact and not a result of daydreaming by someone who was just pushed to the margins of his familiar social horizons, consisted in fact of an *entopia*, i.e., an applied model of an alternative society in a given time and space.⁴⁴

This call for a paradigm-shift is here suggested as a mean to solve the long-standing issue of urban poverty and of the idle masses that nurtured it. Nevertheless, a call for reform of such proportions was unprecedented for the second century standards and would not be appearing again until the 19th century utopian socialists.⁴⁵ Simultaneously, this community which was governed by the principles of a *primitive communism* (*μηδὲν ἄλλο κτῆμα ἔξω τοῦ σώματος κεκτημένου*) model functioned as a *heterotopia* in the margins of *normalcy*.⁴⁶ Observing the case from the perspective of the city's magistrates, the community's dwelling functioned sociologically as an *antispace* that disrupted the landscape familiar to Greek cultural experience which simultaneously could be used as a scapegoat for decompression of popular tension. After all, the Hunter was brought to the theater as a culprit for the economic and social deadlock of the city.

Against that aggressive attitude, Dio promotes the idea of collective self-organization by

⁴¹ *Euboicus*, 81.

⁴² *Euboicus*, 103.

⁴³ See Aelius Aristides, *Roman oration*, 213-214.

⁴⁴ The confirmed, applied example of an idealized social organization comes to contrast to the *Utopia* concept as it was introduced by Thomas More in homonymous work (1516) where the ideal society is by definition timeless and spaceless. See F. E. Manuel & F. P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), p. 122-130, L. Mumford, *Η Ιστορία των Ουτοπιών* (Athens: Νησίδες, 1998), p. 48-50, A. Liakos, *Αποκάλυψη, Ουτοπία και Ιστορία: Οι μεταμορφώσεις της ιστορικής συνείδησης* (Athens: Polis, 2011), p.166-172.

⁴⁵ Cf the Utopian Socialist literature in nineteenth century Britain, France and the United States such as Robert Owen's *New View of Society: Or, Essays on the Formation of Human Character, and the Application of the Principle to Practice* (London: 1813), *Report to the County of Lanark of a Plan for relieving Public Distress* (Glasgow: Glasgow University Press, 1821), *An Explanation of the Cause of Distress which pervades the civilised parts of the world* (London and Paris, 1823) where similar proposals for social reform may be traced in a modern context.

⁴⁶ *Euboicus*, 105.

reclaiming the under-developed space and transforming it into a functional and productive habitat. Moreover, he introduces a model of social struggle not in the context of historical materialism and causality, but as a mean to pursue Virtue (*οἷς πρὸς τοὺς πλουσίους ἡμεῖς ἀγωνιζόμεθα ὥσπερ χορῶν τὰ νῦν, οὐχ ὑπὲρ εὐδαιμονίας προκειμένου τοῦ ἀγῶνος οὐ γὰρ πενία τοῦτ' ὅ γε πρόκειται τὸ ἄθλον οὐδὲ αὖ πλοῦτος, μόνης δὲ ἀρετῆς ἐστὶν ἐξαιρέτων ἄλλως δὲ ὑπὲρ ἀγωγῆς τινος καὶ μετριότητος βίου*).⁴⁷ The emphasis to a more natural way of life comes to contrast to the corruption of the urban environment, yet it is obvious that the existence of an alternative model was perceived as a threat to the established urban institutions and left the community exposed to the threat of the authorities.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the orator's sympathy towards this peculiar community which would otherwise be invisible in the available sources, may reveal a latent distress to the pre-existing social norms as well as a spirit of civil disobedience towards established (urban) authorities.

The moral advantage of the *Noble-Savage* in *Euboicus* resembles the narrative of the unspoiled cultural otherness in Dio's contemporary, Tacitus, who in his *Germania* treatise, constructs a similar image of the *Germans*. Dio's portrayal of the *Getae* follows the same guidelines as well by praising their vividness and will to sustain themselves and defend their land to the death, qualities which had been long forgotten by the Greek cities.⁴⁹ It was an example of a group of people, who despite their primitive, compared to Roman standards, lifestyle, kept defying the juggernaut of Roman authority, resembling to the zeal for autonomy of the classical Greek city-states. Although the *Olympic* discourse was addressed during the reign of Nerva and most probably mirrored the recent past of Domitian's rule, the evocation of such an example supports the durability of Dio's ideas regarding the established urban civilization.⁵⁰ If you *Euboicus* stands as a proof of the author's frustration concerning the micro-conflicts of the Greek cities, his earlier reference to the primitivism of the *Getae* proves the durability of his thought despite his change of luck. However, the resistance of cultural otherness to the incorporation in the Roman *Imperium* contrasts the pacifist nature of the Hunter's community in mountainous Euboea, which rather leads us to the conclusion that Dio rather preferred civil disobedience, seclusion and self-sufficiency against local and central authorities, perhaps acknowledging that the context of *Euboicus* would not inspire the major social *reset* that he had hoped.

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⁴⁷ *Euboicus*, 118.

⁴⁸ See J. D. Hughes, 'The Hunters of Euboea: Mountain Folk in the Classical Mediterranean', *Mountain Research and Development*, 16/2 (May 1996), pp. 91, 94, 98, 100. Also, G. Salmeri, 'Dio, Rome and the civic life of Asia Minor', S. Swain (ed.), *Dio Chrysostom: Politics, Letters and Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.53-92, 102-103.

⁴⁹ Cf. Dio, *Olympic*, 16-20.

⁵⁰ See R. Evans, *Utopia Antiqua: Readings of the Golden Age and Decline at Rome* (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), p.89. Cf. the moral advantage of the Scythians and Getae as was celebrated already by Horace, *Odes*, III.24.9-16.