

Simon the Shoemaker as an Ideal Cynic

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ACCORDING TO DIOGENES LAERTIUS (2.122) Socrates often visited the workshop of a shoemaker named Simon, who took notes of their conversations and even included thirty-three of them in a book.¹ The association of Socrates with Simon is assumed in other ancient references to this shoemaker-philosopher.² Most scholars, however, have been suspicious. They point out that neither Plato nor Xenophon ever mentions Simon and that the traditions themselves, besides being late, are scanty, improbable and legendary. Consequently, they deny that Socrates visited Simon's workshop, or even

¹ The following abbreviations will be used: DUDLEY=D. R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism from Diogenes to the 6th Century A.D.* (London 1937); VON FRITZ, "Phaidon"=K. von Fritz, "Phaidon von Elis und der 12. und 13. Sokratikerbrief," *Philologus* 90(1935) 240-44; GERHARD "Legende"=G. A. Gerhard, "Zur Legende vom Kyniker Diogenes," *ArchRW* 15 (1912) 388-408; GERHARD, *Phoinix*=G. A. Gerhard, *Phoinix von Kolophon* (Leipzig 1909); HIRZEL=R. Hirzel, *Der Dialog* (Leipzig 1895); HOBEIN=H. Hobein, "Σίμων (6)," *RE* 3A (1927) 163-73; JOËL=K. Joël, *Der echte und Xenophontische Sokrates* (Berlin 1901); KÖHLER=L. Köhler, *Die Briefe des Sokrates und der Sokratiker* (*Philologus* Suppl. 20.2, Leipzig 1928); LAU=O. Lau, *Schuster und Schusterhandwerk in der griechisch-römischen Literatur und Kunst* (diss. Bonn 1967); MANNEBACH=E. Mannebach (ed.), *Aristippi et Cyrenicorum Fragmenta* (Leiden 1961); MERLAN=P. Merlan, "Minor Socratics," *JHPhil* 10 (1972) 143-52; ROSSETTI=L. Rossetti, "'Socratica' in Fedone di Elide," *StUrb* 47 (1973) 364-81; SCHERING=O. Schering, *Symbola ad Socratis et Socraticorum epistulas explicandas* (diss. Greifswald 1917); SYKUTRIS=J. Sykutris, *Die Briefe des Sokrates und der Sokratiker* (Paderborn 1933); UEBERWEG-PRAECHTER=F. Ueberweg/K. Praechter, *Philosophie des Altertums*¹² (Berlin 1926); WILAMOWITZ=U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Phaidon von Elis," *Hermes* 14 (1879) 187-93; ZELLER=E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*⁵ (Leipzig 1922).

² For the references to Simon see, in addition to Diog.Laert. 2.122-23: Plut. *Maxime cum princ. phil. diss.* 776B; ps.-Socr. *Epp.* 9.4; 11, 12, 13, and 18.2; Synes. *Dion* 1153-55; Ammon. *De interpret.* 164A; *Suda s.vv.* Σωκράτης and Φαίδων. There should be added the reference to [Σί]μων Σω[κ]ρατικός that appears in *P.Ross.Georg.* 13, which is a list of 19 authors, including Simon (line 19), that made up one man's library. For the text and restoration [Σί]μων, see G. Zereteli and O. Krueger, *Papyri russischer und georgischer Sammlungen, I: Literarische Texte* (Tiflis 1925) 153-58. Cf. R. A. Pack, *The Greek and Latin Literary Texts from Greco-Roman Egypt*² (Ann Arbor 1965) 113-14. On Simon see Zeller II¹ 242-43; Hobein 163-73; Wilamowitz 187-93; Hirzel I 102-05; Joël II 306-07; Schering 19-23; and Lau 189-95.

that Simon ever existed.³ Simon the shoemaker, it is claimed, was really the literary creation of another Socratic, Phaidon of Elis, who wrote a dialogue entitled “Simon” (cf. Diog.Laert. 2.105), which, except for a few fragments, is now lost.⁴

These conclusions about Simon have been vigorously challenged by R. Hirzel and H. Hobein.⁵ The latter argues that the silence of Plato and Xenophon, our two major sources for the companions of Socrates, is no final proof against Simon’s existence, since Xenophon’s sojourns in Athens were short and since even Plato did not otherwise include all those known to have conversed with Socrates.⁶ Hobein also argues that Simon was mentioned not only by Phaidon but probably also by Antisthenes; thus, if he were mentioned by two early writers, it is most unlikely that he would have been the literary creation of either.⁷

But if there are thus no grounds for doubting Simon’s existence,⁸ it must be admitted, as Hirzel does, that very little can be said about the historical Simon⁹ except for his association with Socrates¹⁰ and a

³ See esp. Wilamowitz 187: “Dass der Schuster Simon keine historische Figur ist, sondern die ideale Verkörperung der Schuster, mit denen Sokrates zu exemplizieren liebte, weiss jeder Knabe zu sagen.” Doubt about Simon’s existence had been raised earlier by F. Ast, *Platons Leben und Schriften* (Leipzig 1816) 501–02, and has been reiterated many times since: K. O. Müller, *Geschichte der griechischen Litteratur* II (Stuttgart 1884) 25; F. Susemihl, *Geschichte der griechischen Litteratur* I (Leipzig 1891) 24 n.65; Zeller II¹ 243; T. Gomperz, *Griechische Denker*⁴ II (Berlin and Leipzig 1925) 162; Überweg-Praechter 155; and J. Humbert, *Socrate et les petits socratiques* (Paris 1967) 280 and 283.

⁴ See esp. Wilamowitz 187–88. Cf. Zeller II¹ 243 n.2 and K. von Fritz, “Phaidon (3),” *RE* 19 (1938) 1541. On Phaidon, see now Rossetti 372–78.

⁵ See Hobein 163–71 and Hirzel I 102–04, whom Hobein 163 incorrectly includes among those who deny Simon’s existence.

⁶ Cf. Hobein 164–65 and Hirzel I 103–04.

⁷ Cf. Hobein 166–71. The claim that Simon was also mentioned in Antisthenes’ “Heracles” goes back to a perceptive suggestion of F. Dümmler, *Antisthenica* (diss. Bonn 1882) 37 n.1: “Fortasse non e Phaedonis dialogo solo innotuit Simo sutor (vide Wilamowitzii commentationem in Hermae tom. XIV p. 187s. 476s.). Nam in epistulis Socraticorum IX, XI, XII, XIII fingitur familiaritas inter Antisthenem et Simonem intercedere quae non poterat colligi e Phaedonis dialogo et omnino vix fingi nisi Simo erat ab Antisthene celebratus.” While Dümmler’s suggestion is conjectural, it is plausible and has been taken up by Joël II 307 n.2 and Schering 36–37.

⁸ This conclusion receives parallel support from archaeological evidence if, as H. A. Thompson (“Excavations in the Athenian Agora: 1953,” *Hesperia* 23 [1954] 54–55) claims, a shoemaker’s shop, found outside the southwest corner of the Agora and occupied in the latter decades of the fifth century, can be identified as Simon’s workshop; see the fuller description and discussion in D. B. Thompson, “The House of Simon the Shoemaker,” *Archaeology* 13 (1960) 235–40. The identification is accepted by Lau 192.

⁹ See Hirzel I 104. Cf. Schering 21.

¹⁰ The association of a shoemaker like Simon with Socrates is probable. On the general

modest literary-philosophical activity.¹¹ For, as will be shown, the traditional figure of Simon has been shaped less by historical reminiscence than by the philosophical issues and debates in which he played a not unimportant rôle, particularly in their Cynic form.

Cynic features in the portrait of Simon have been noticed before,¹² but the precise significance of this Cynicized portrait of Simon the shoemaker has not been seen and it thus becomes the subject of the present study. Specifically this article seeks to show that the traditions about Simon the shoemaker have been shaped by his rôle in debates over whether the philosopher should associate with kings, and especially by his rôle in these debates as they were carried on among Cynics themselves, that is to say, between strict and hedonistic Cynics.

Next to Simon's association with Socrates, the most constant feature of the Simon tradition is his refusal to leave his workbench and accept Pericles' support. In Diogenes Laertius (2.123) we have this tradition, no doubt legendary,¹³ in which Simon responds to a promise of support from Pericles by saying that he would never sell his freedom of speech (*παρρησία*). Plutarch's mention of Simon in *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum* 776B also pairs him with Pericles,¹⁴ but the function of this pairing here is especially instructive. Plutarch, as the tractate's title suggests, argues that the philosopher should associate with rulers (cf. 777B),¹⁵ but he is also very much aware that some people¹⁶ would disagree with him. These people apparently opposed philosophers going to court and argued their position, at

practice of holding discussions in the Agora, see H. A. Thompson and R. E. Wycherley, *The Agora of Athens* (Princeton 1972) 170–74. On Socrates' practice of frequenting the shops and tables of the Agora see Pl. *Apol.* 17c; *Hipp.Min.* 368b; *Gorg.* 491a; Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.1. See also Lau 191–92.

¹¹ Cf. further Hirzel I 104–05, and Hobein 171–73.

¹² So, e.g., Wilamowitz 190; Hirzel I 104 n.4; Joël II 307; Gerhard, *Phoinix* 36; Schering 37; and Lau 193.

¹³ Cf. Hobein 163.

¹⁴ Rossetti 372–73, makes Phaidon's "Simon" the source of Plutarch's reference. That Plutarch could have read Phaidon's writings, still extant at Plutarch's time (so Sen. *Ep.* 94.41), is plausible in light of Plutarch's exceptional familiarity with Greek literature, as shown by P. A. Stadter, *Plutarch's Historical Methods* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1965) 125–40. The concern for sources, however, should not distract us from observing the context in which Plutarch considered it appropriate to mention Simon (whatever its source) as well as Plutarch's assumption that Simon would be well known to his readers.

¹⁵ For Plutarch's overall position see now C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford 1972) 110–30.

¹⁶ Note the *ὡς ἔνιοι νομίζουσι* in 776b (p.1 line 8 Hubert-Pohlenz).

least as Plutarch presents it, by appealing to the example of Simon. On their view the ruler¹⁷ who needs advice should say to the philosopher: “Let me change from Pericles or Cato and become Simon the shoemaker or Dionysius the schoolteacher in order that you might sit down and converse with me, as Socrates did with those men (that is to say, with Simon and Dionysius).”¹⁸

Whatever the identity of Plutarch’s opponents it is clear that the tradition about Simon’s refusal to leave his workshop was used in a debate over whether philosophers should associate with rulers. This function of the Simon traditions is found also in the apocryphal letters of the Socratics.¹⁹ These letters, our most important source for Simon, receive detailed treatment later, but at this point in the argument only a few general observations are required to confirm what was said about the Plutarch passage. The eighth letter, from Antisthenes to Aristippus, opens with the thesis: “The philosopher is not to associate with tyrants nor to be in attendance at Sicilian tables: rather, he is to be at home and striving to be self-sufficient (*αὐτάρκης*).”²⁰ The next five letters (*Epp.* 9–13) debate this thesis, with Aristippus on one side, writing from Dionysius’ court and thus opposing Antisthenes,²¹ and with Simon on the other side, holding philosophical discussion in his workshop and thus exemplifying the Antisthenian viewpoint.²² In these letters, then, Simon, by being allied with Antisthenes, is ex-

¹⁷ The text at this point is corrupt. For *ἀνὴρ θεραπευτικός* of the mss. I prefer Frerich’s emendation *ἀνὴρ ἡγεμονικός* (J. Frerichs, *Plutarchi libelli duo politici* [diss. Göttingen 1929] 32).

¹⁸ Translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own. Again there are textual difficulties; my translation is based on the Teubner text (p.2 lines 2–4 Hubert-Pohlenz). But, whatever the text, the Loeb transl. by H. N. Fowler is incorrect. Fowler has rendered *ὡς Σωκράτης ἐκείνω* as “as Socrates did with Pericles.” Context requires that the referent of *ἐκείνω* be Simon. Cf. Rossetti 373 n.33, who translates “. . . come faceva Socrate con Simone.”

¹⁹ For the text of these letters see Köhler 7–57. Her commentary is brief and should be supplemented by Sykutris, who divides the letters into two groups; in the first are *Epp.* 1–7, the letters of Socrates, which belong to Cynic literature and are to be dated to the first century; in the second group are *Epp.* 8–35 (excepting 28, 35, and perhaps 29), the letters of the Socratics, which were written by another author, who was rhetorically trained and familiar with Plato’s writings as well as various philosophical handbooks. These letters are dated to the third century. But Cynic influence on the second group also needs to be emphasized, as is done by Schering 32–34 and Köhler 4–5. The dating of these letters may also need revision, perhaps back to the first or early second century, on which see *infra* n.62.

²⁰ Ps.-Socr. *Ep.* 8 (p.22 lines 2–4 Köhler).

²¹ Ps.-Socr. *Epp.* 9, 11 and 13 (pp.22–26 Köhler).

²² Ps.-Socr. *Ep.* 12 (p.25 Köhler). Wilamowitz 190 is thus incorrect when he views Simon as standing midway between Antisthenes and Aristippus.

explicitly related to the debate over whether the philosopher should associate with rulers.²³

Given the importance of this debate for the Simon traditions, it is necessary to indicate some features of the debate, especially which philosophers lined up on what side, before commenting further on Simon's rôle in it. A perusal of Diogenes Laertius is useful, since he was keenly interested in the relations between philosophers and rulers.²⁴ For example, Diogenes points out that Stoics, such as Chrysippus, said that the philosopher should engage in politics.²⁵ Indeed, philosophers were often invited by kings to their courts²⁶ and usually they accepted.²⁷ Thus we find philosophers of nearly every persuasion at the court of some king: Xenophon with Cyrus (*cf.* Diog.Laert. 2.49–52), Aeschines with Dionysius (2.62–63; *cf.* 3.36), Aristippus with Dionysius (2.67–69, 73, 78–82), Theodorus the hedonist with Ptolemy (2.102), Euphantus with Antigonus Doson (2.110), Diodorus with Ptolemy Soter (2.111), Menedemus with Nicocreon and Antigonus (2.129, 142), Plato with Dionysius (3.18–22; *cf.* 6.25–26), Speusippus with Cassander (4.1), Xenocrates with Dionysius (4.11), Bion with Antigonus (4.46), Aristotle with Amyntas, Alexander, Hermias and Philip (5.1–4), Theophrastus with Cassander and Ptolemy (5.37), Strato with Ptolemy Philadelphus (5.58), Demetrius with Ptolemy Soter (5.78), Persaeus and Philonides with Antigonus Gonatus (7.9), Sphaerus with Ptolemy Philopator (7.177).²⁸

By going to court, Chrysippus adds, philosophers would promote virtue and restrain vice,²⁹ though some philosophers simply sought the support and luxury available at court.³⁰ In any case, Diogenes frequently mentions philosophers giving moral advice and philosophical

²³ Cf. also von Fritz, "Phaidon" 243.

²⁴ Cf. R. Hope, *The Book of Diogenes Laertius* (New York 1930) 160–61.

²⁵ See Diog.Laert. 7.121.

²⁶ See the letter of Antigonus Gonatus inviting Zeno to come to his court (*apud* Diog.Laert. 7.6–7). Cf. also Diog.Laert. 2.49–52 (Xenophon), 129 (Menedemus); 4.37 (Theophrastus); 9.12–14 (Heraclitus).

²⁷ Because of his age Zeno declined Antigonus' invitation but sent Persaeus and Philonides (*cf.* Diog.Laert. 7.8–9).

²⁸ On the political activities of Plato and the Academy see A.-H. Chroust, "Plato's Academy: The First Organized School of Political Science in Antiquity," *Review of Politics* 29 (1967) 25–40.

²⁹ See Diog.Laert. 7.121. Cf. also the exchange of letters between Antigonus and Zeno (Diog.Laert. 7.6–9).

³⁰ See Diog.Laert. 2.62–63 (Aeschines), 78–79 (Aristippus); and 4.1 (Speusippus).

instruction,³¹ for which they received money and other gifts.³² But there were also drawbacks and dangers to being a court philosopher. He was sometimes subject to abuse and humiliation from the king, as happened, for example, to Aristippus at the court of Dionysius. On one occasion he had to put up with being spat upon by Dionysius, who on other occasions compelled him to lecture and commanded him to dance.³³ Moreover, a court philosopher risked severe punishment if he spoke to the king with a philosopher's boldness (*παρρησία*), as we see in the case of Menedemus. He, along with other philosophers, was invited to the court of Nicocreon in Cyprus to celebrate a feast with the king. Menedemus, however, twice rebuked the king and would have been killed on account of his *παρρησία* had he not escaped.³⁴

With regard to the Simon traditions this survey of Diogenes Laertius explains, for example, why Simon regarded his *παρρησία* as the price for being supported. This survey also points out that Simon's refusal to go to Pericles made him an exception among Diogenes' philosophers. But Simon's action, while uncommon, was not unique. It matched that of his teacher Socrates, who, according to Diogenes, declined the invitations of Archelaus of Macedon, Scopas of Crannon and Eurylochus of Larissa to go to their courts.³⁵ As we have seen, Socrates' example was generally ignored by his other disciples—for example, by Plato and Aristippus. In fact, besides Simon, the only Socratics who followed him in this matter were Cynics. Diogenes Laertius includes numerous criticisms by Cynics of the philosophers who went to court.³⁶ Thus is explained the Cynic view of Antisthenes as stated in the Socratic epistles, that the philosopher should not associate with rulers, as well as his admiration for Simon.

That Simon should have been taken over consciously by the Cynics is shown by the association of other Cynics with shoemakers. There is, for example, Lucian's ideal Cynic, Cyniscus, who is paired in the

³¹ See Diog.Laert. 2.110 (Euphantus), 128 and 141 (Menedemus); 5.2 (Aristotle), 58 (Strato); 7.36 (Persaeus).

³² See Diog.Laert. 2.63 (Aeschines), 67, 81–82 (Aristippus), 115–16 (Stilpo); 3.9 (Plato); 4.38 and 42 (Arcesilaus); 5.58 (Strato); 7.169 (Cleanthes).

³³ See Diog.Laert. 2.67, 73, 78. Cf. also 3.18 (Plato) and 7.177 (Sphaerus).

³⁴ See Diog.Laert. 2.129–30. Cf. also 3.18–22 (Plato) and 5.5, where it is said that Callisthenes' *παρρησία* before Alexander cost him his life.

³⁵ See Diog.Laert. 2.25.

³⁶ See Diog.Laert. 6.25–26, 58, 76 (Diogenes).

Cataplus with a shoemaker named Micyllus.³⁷ Especially significant for our analysis, however, is an anecdote about the Cynic Crates which is used by Teles. In fr.IV^B, a diatribe that attempts to refute the common notion that poverty is a hindrance to practising philosophy, Teles argues that wealthy people have too much to do to have any leisure for taking up philosophy but that a poor man does not and thus can turn to philosophy, an argument that is illustrated by an incident about Crates in the shoemaker shop of a certain Philiscus: “Zeno said that Crates was sitting in a shoemaker’s shop and reading aloud Aristotle’s *Protrepticus*, which he had written for Themison, king of Cyprus, saying that no one had more advantage for taking up philosophy than he had, for he had great wealth to spend on it and a reputation besides. While he was reading, Zeno said, the shoemaker paid attention to him and at the same time continued to do his stitching. Crates remarked, ‘It seems to me, Philiscus, that I should write a *Protrepticus* for you, since I see that you have more of an advantage for taking up philosophy than the one for whom Aristotle wrote’.”³⁸

This passage is most instructive. First of all, it has the Cynic Crates associating with a shoemaker, a scene that recalls Socrates conversing with Simon.³⁹ Moreover, as in the Plutarch passage, the context of the anecdote is important. Indeed, the context is the same as in Plutarch—that is to say, the context is whether the philosopher should associate with rulers. Only this time the reference to a philosopher in a shoemaker’s shop is made by a Cynic, one who stands on the other side of the debate from Plutarch. Thus not only do we have reconfirmed the appropriateness of citing the example of a philosopher with a shoemaker precisely in the context of this debate, but we also learn that Crates’ association with Philiscus was symbolic—that is to say, it was consciously done in protest to Aristotle’s practice of seeking out kings for philosophical instruction, as is shown by Crates’ intention of

³⁷ Whether Micyllus was already a figure in Lucian’s Menippean source or was introduced into the dialogue by Lucian himself is difficult to determine. For these views, see R. Helm, *Lucian und Menipp* (Leipzig and Berlin 1906) 63–79, and B. McCarthy, “Lucian and Menippus,” *YCS* 4 (1934) 39–50. In any case, by Lucian’s time the pairing of a Cynic with a shoemaker is obviously a literary convention.

³⁸ Teles, fr.IV^B (p.46 lines 6–14 Hense).

³⁹ On the relation of Philiscus and Simon see Joël II 307 n.1.

writing a *Protrepticus* for Philiscus.⁴⁰ On Crates' view (as portrayed by Teles) the philosopher should associate with shoemakers, not rulers, since Philiscus—in contrast to Themison, who is an example of the wealthy man with no leisure for philosophy⁴¹—can do his work at the same time as he listens to the philosopher and thus is truly qualified to take up philosophy.⁴²

It should now be clear that the context, or *Sitz im Leben*, of the Simon traditions was the debate over whether the philosopher should associate with rulers. Socrates, and later the Cynics, said no and chose to associate with poor shoemakers instead. Thus, besides the pairing of Socrates and Simon, the following Cynics were paired with shoemakers: Crates with Philiscus, Cyniscus with Micyllus, and Antisthenes with Simon.

It is not enough, however, simply to relate Simon to Cynicism, for Cynicism itself was a diverse phenomenon. Antisthenes' admiration for Simon would not be shared by all Cynics, since the debate over whether the philosopher should associate with rulers divided Cynics, too, roughly along the lines of the two wings within the Cynic school—that is to say, strict and hedonistic Cynicism.⁴³ Important sources for this intra-Cynic debate are the Cynic anecdotal and epistolary literature and for our purposes especially those texts that have a Cynic, usually Diogenes or Antisthenes, and the hedonist Aristippus (who in these sources speaks for hedonistic Cynicism) attacking one another.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ On the familiar practice of writing books to kings to gain their favor or in gratitude for support see Diog.Laert. 2.84 (Aristippus), 110 (Euphantus); 4.14 (Xenocrates), 38 (Arcesilaus); 9.109 (Timon). Cf. A.-H. Chroust, "What Prompted Aristotle to Address the *Protrepticus* to Themison of Cyprus?" *Hermes* 94 (1966) 202–07.

⁴¹ On the king having no leisure for philosophy see Diog.Laert. 2.130.

⁴² It is precisely Philiscus' ability to do his work while paying attention to Crates that the philosopher recognizes and that prompts him to consider writing a *Protrepticus* for the shoemaker.

⁴³ See Gerhard, "Legende" 390: "Ein Hauptvorwurf des Kynischen Asketen brandmerkt den hedonischen Schlemmer als feigen Parasiten und Fürstenknecht." On hedonistic Cynicism, see: Gerhard, *Phoinix* 32–44, 58–59, 113–15, 170–72; E. Bevan, "Hellenistic Popular Philosophy," in J. B. Bury et al., *The Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge 1923) 89–90; Ueberweg-Praechter 432–35; K. von Fritz, *Quellenuntersuchungen zu Leben und Philosophie des Diogenes* (*Philologus* Suppl. 18,2, Leipzig 1926) 41–47; Dudley 103–06; and Merlan 143–52.

⁴⁴ That the Cyrenaic Aristippus could be used by Cynics to represent their hedonistic position in these anecdotes and letters is shown e.g., by Teles' quotation of Aristippus (see Teles, fr.III p.29 lines 13–14 Hense [=fr.85 Mannebach]) and by other traditions that portray Aristippus with Cynic traits, as in Diogenes' taunt that Aristippus was a βασιλικὸς κύων (see Diog.Laert. 2.66 [=fr.29 Mannebach]). Cf. also Gerhard, "Legende" 390–91; Mannebach 69; and Merlan 151–52.

We begin with an anecdote at Diogenes Laertius 2.68 about Diogenes criticizing Aristippus for his association with the tyrant Dionysius, whose tables allowed Aristippus to live extravagantly. “Diogenes, washing the dirt from his vegetables, saw [Aristippus] passing and jeered at him in these terms, ‘If you had learnt to make these your diet, you would not have paid court (*θεραπεύειν*) to kings’, to which his rejoinder was, ‘And if you knew how to associate with men (*ἀνθρώποις*) [or tyrants (*τυράννοις*)], you would not be washing vegetables’.”⁴⁵

This anecdote was very popular,⁴⁶ even taking on the form of a letter.⁴⁷ Moreover, this same anecdote was told of different philosophers. Significant for us is the version in which Antisthenes has replaced Diogenes.⁴⁸ This popular anecdote, summarizing the strict and hedonistic Cynic views on whether to associate with rulers, thus provides the background for the epistolary clash between Antisthenes and Aristippus in the letters of the Socratics.⁴⁹ The nature of this clash between strict and hedonistic Cynics, as well as Simon’s rôle in it, will be clear from a summary of these letters.

The strict Cynic position is presented by Antisthenes in the eighth letter,⁵⁰ which is a sharp criticism of Aristippus’ extravagant life (*τὸ πολυτελῶς ζῆν*) at Dionysius’ court.⁵¹ The philosopher, Antisthenes begins, is not to be at the courts of tyrants or attend Sicilian tables; on the contrary, he is to stay at home and strive to be self-sufficient (*αὐτάρκης*).⁵² Moreover, Aristippus is wrong in thinking that the wise

⁴⁵ Diog.Laert. 2.68 (Hick’s LCL transl. [=fr.52A Mannebach]). On the textual problem see L. Sternbach (ed.), *Gnomologium Vaticanum* (WS 9–11 [1887–89], repr. Berlin 1963) 78.

⁴⁶ Instances are conveniently collected in fr.52–53 Mannebach.

⁴⁷ See Diogenes’ letter to Aristippus (*Ep.* 32, pp.246–47 Hercher).

⁴⁸ See fr.52c Mannebach: *Antisthenes, cynicus philosophus, cum oluscula lavaret et animadvertisset Aristippum Cyrenaicum philosophum cum Dionysio tyranno Siculorum ingredientem, dixit: “Aristippe, si his contentus esses, non regis pedes sequereris.” cui respondit Aristippus: “at tu si posses commode cum rege loqui, non his contentus esses.”*

⁴⁹ Sykutris 47 is incorrect, then, when it is said that there is no tradition of a hostile relationship between Antisthenes and Aristippus, as set forth in these letters. The clash, says Sykutris, was the author’s doing, designed to preserve his intention of producing letters from Socrates’ pupils. For the view that the hostility was traditional, see Hobein 166 and Köhler 100. Mannebach 93 goes so far to say that Aristippus formulated his doctrine of *ἡδονή* specifically against Antisthenes. On the close relationship of *Epp.* 8–13 see Sykutris 45.

⁵⁰ On the eighth letter cf. Köhler 100–01 and Sykutris 45–50.

⁵¹ On Aristippus living extravagantly see Diog.Laert. 2.68–69, 75–76 and 84. Cf. further fr.75–76 Mannebach.

⁵² On self-sufficiency see Gerhard, *Phoinix* 56–58.

man should acquire much money and have the powerful as friends, since money is not necessary and the powerful, being unlettered, cannot be friends.⁵³ Consequently, Antisthenes' advice is for Aristippus to leave Syracuse and to prefer the hellebore of Anticyra to the wine at Dionysius' court.⁵⁴ Only then will Aristippus exchange his present sickness and foolishness (*ἀφροσύνη*) for health and wisdom (*φρόνησις*).

The hedonistic Cynic position is provided in the ninth letter, which is Aristippus' reply to Antisthenes.⁵⁵ The letter opens with delightful irony: "Antisthenes, we surely are unhappy! For how can we be anything but unhappy since we are with a tyrant and eating and drinking extravagantly (*πολυτελεία*) every day and are anointed with some of the most fragrant perfumes . . ."⁵⁶ Aristippus refers to the clothes, money and three women also given to him by Dionysius and wonders when someone will deliver him from the cruelty of Dionysius!⁵⁷ Aristippus then mocks Antisthenes' Cynic way of life by advising him to wash and drink from a fountain and to wear the same filthy cloak summer and winter, as is fitting for a free man (*ἐλεύθερος*) living in Athens.⁵⁸ He adds that he is sending him lupines to eat after his lecture on Heracles and concludes by advising him to go and converse with Simon the shoemaker, about whom he says: "As far as you are concerned, there is no one greater in wisdom (*σοφία*), nor will there ever be."⁵⁹

With this mention of Simon in the ninth letter we thus have the shoemaker-philosopher introduced into the debate. In fact, the eleventh letter⁶⁰ relates him to it explicitly. Aristippus, having made use of his friendship with Dionysius in order to save the lives of some youths, writes to Aeschines and says of Antisthenes: "It is not acceptable to him to make use of tyrant friends, but . . . (it is acceptable to him) to court (*θεραπεύειν*) Simon."⁶¹

⁵³ On Antisthenes' criticisms cf. Sykutris 47.

⁵⁴ On hellebore cf. Köhler 101.

⁵⁵ On this letter cf. Köhler 101–03 and Sykutris 50–51.

⁵⁶ Ps.-Socr. *Ep.* 9.1 (p.22 line 3–p.23 line 2 Köhler).

⁵⁷ On these gifts cf. Sykutris 48 nn.2–5.

⁵⁸ On these Cynic features cf. Sykutris 49 nn.2–5.

⁵⁹ Ps.-Socr. *Ep.* 9.4 (p.24 lines 10–11 Köhler).

⁶⁰ On this letter cf. Köhler 103 and Sykutris 50–51.

⁶¹ Ps.-Socr. *Ep.* 11 (p.25 lines 2–7 Köhler). Note the use of *θεραπεύειν*.

In the twelfth letter⁶² Simon himself enters the debate with a letter to Aristippus.⁶³ Simon has heard that Aristippus mocks his *σοφία* before Dionysius. Then he says: "I admit that I am a shoemaker and do such things, and I am ready, if necessary, to cut straps for the purpose of admonishing (*εἰς νοουθεσίαν*) foolish men who think that they are living in accordance with the teaching of Socrates when they are living in great luxury."⁶⁴ Simon adds that Antisthenes will chastise him and his foolish children, since Aristippus had mocked their manner of living. Simon closes with a sample of his *σοφία*: "Remember hunger and thirst, for these can do great things for those who are pursuing self-control,"⁶⁵ a maxim in keeping with strict Cynicism.

Aristippus' reply to Simon makes up the thirteenth letter.⁶⁶ He denies that he mocked Simon; Phaidon did, when he said that Simon was wiser than Prodicus of Ceos, whose encomium on Heracles Simon had refuted.⁶⁷ Aristippus says that he admires him, since he, though only a shoemaker, is so wise that Socrates and many aristocratic youths are persuaded to converse with him.⁶⁸ But then Aristippus'

⁶² On this letter cf. Köhler 103–04 and Sykutris 51–54. Scholarly attention to this letter has a bearing on the dating of the letters of the Socratics (cf. *supra* n.19). Wilamowitz 189–92 claimed Phaidon's "Simon" as the source for *Epp.* 12 and 13. W. Capelle, *De Cynicorum epistulis* (diss. Göttingen 1896) 8–10, observed similarities between Simon's letter and *Ps.-Diog. Ep.* 29 and argued that both go back to the Phaidonic source. Schering 37 n.2, however, traced both back to Antisthenes' "Heracles." Then Sykutris 51–53 denied any common source and considered Simon's letter to be literarily dependent on *Ps.-Diog. Epp.* 29 and 32, a conclusion important for dating the letters of the Socratics. For if the apocryphal letters of Diogenes were written in the first century B.C. or first century (on which see now V. Emeljanow, *The Letters of Diogenes* [diss. Stanford 1968] 4–5), then the letters of the Socratics must be later still. But if there is literary dependence, it would seem the other way around, as argued by von Fritz, "Phaidon" 240–44. Thus an early dating for the letters of the Socratics would be required. But while theories of literary dependence do not seem necessary since the similarities can be accounted for by common dependence on Cynic traditions, an earlier dating, say the first century, does seem plausible because other data regarding Simon cluster around the first century: Seneca's use of Phaidon's writings (cf. *supra* n.14), Plutarch's mention of Simon, and Theodorus' abridgement of Teles with its mention of Philiscus (on which see Dudley 85 n.1).

⁶³ With Simon's letter the debate is no longer between two characters, as in the anecdotes (and still in *Ps.-Diog. Ep.* 32), but is now carried on with three, with the ridicule being shifted to Simon's shoemaking.

⁶⁴ *Ps.-Socr. Ep.* 12 (p.25 lines 3–6 Köhler). On Simon in the Cynic rôle of *νοουθετής* see Gerhard, *Phoinix* 35–36.

⁶⁵ *Ps.-Socr. Ep.* 12 (p.25 lines 9–10 Köhler).

⁶⁶ On this letter cf. Köhler 103–04 and Sykutris 54–57.

⁶⁷ On this point cf. Hirzel I 112 n.3.

⁶⁸ Cf. Wilamowitz 191.

attack becomes direct: “But now we know what kind of person you are, for Antisthenes visits you.”⁶⁹ Aristippus then invites Simon to Dionysius’ court. “You can do your philosophy (*φιλοσοφεῖν*) especially in Syracuse,⁷⁰ for leather straps and goods are valued here. Moreover, do you not know that I, desiring shoes at all times, will make your trade into something marvelous? But as for that barefoot Antisthenes, what else has he done than to bring about idleness and no sales since he persuades the youth and every Athenian to go barefoot? See, then, how much of a friend I am—one who is content with leisure and pleasure (*ἡδονή*).”⁷¹ Thus, if Simon saw it his way, he would admire him and “ridicule those who have long beards and staffs for their own boasting, those who are dirty and lousy and who have long nails like beasts and whose tenets are contrary to your trade.”⁷²

It should now be clear from this summary of these letters of the Socratics that the debate contained in them simply develops the clash concisely expressed in the anecdote with which we began this analysis. The basic issue motivating all these letters (*Epp.* 8–13) has been whether to associate with rulers and lead an extravagant life. Consequently, this epistolary debate, written in a style conforming to the conventions of letter writing⁷³ and expanded, as has been noted, by drawing on traditions about the various personalities involved and on Cynic commonplaces and popular conceptions about Cynics, is to be interpreted in terms of the intra-Cynic debate between strict and hedonistic Cynics.

Within this specific context the figure of Simon the shoemaker is to be viewed. Mocked by Aristippus, Simon is also admired by Antisthenes and so functions—for strict Cynics at least—as an ideal Cynic, one who might be called the ‘working-philosopher’, who by staying at his workbench preserves his *παρρησία* and attains *αὐτάρκεια*. That Simon functions in these letters as an ideal Cynic is indicated also by

⁶⁹ Ps.-Socr. *Ep.* 13.1 (p.26 lines 9–10 Köhler). In view of the debate between strict and hedonistic Cynics it is significant that it is precisely Antisthenes’ association with Simon that Aristippus objects to.

⁷⁰ Wilamowitz 190 understands τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν as *νουθεσία ἀνθρώπων ἀφρόνων* (from *Ep.* 12), but, as Sykutris 54 n.7 points out, Wilamowitz has missed Aristippus’ ironic reference to Simon’s trade, as the context makes clear.

⁷¹ Ps.-Socr. *Ep.* 13.1–2 (p.26 lines 10–17 Köhler).

⁷² Ps.-Socr. *Ep.* 13.2 (p.26 lines 19–22 Köhler).

⁷³ For details see Sykutris 118–19.

Xenophon's praise of him in the eighteenth letter,⁷⁴ which concludes as follows: "Greet Simon the shoemaker and praise him because he persists in devoting himself to the teachings of Socrates and uses neither poverty nor his trade as pretexts for not doing philosophy, like some others who do not want to understand fully nor esteem the teachings of Socrates."⁷⁵

To sum up, while the earlier historical and source-critical studies of Simon the shoemaker have yielded few if any significant results, a *traditionsgeschichtliche* investigation of the Simon traditions proves much more useful. In fact, the results of the latter method help to explain why the other approaches have yielded so little: Simon the shoemaker came to function in a very specific context, whether the philosopher is to associate with rulers (or cobblers); moreover, Simon was admired really only by strict Cynics, that is to say, by those who represented the minority opinion on this question. Thus, whatever can be said about the historical Simon or about the ultimate literary sources of the Simon tradition, we must acknowledge this debate and these Cynics as chiefly responsible for preserving and shaping the traditions about Simon the shoemaker.⁷⁶

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⁷⁴ On this letter cf. Köhler 111 and Sykutris 69–70.

⁷⁵ Ps.-Socr. *Ep.* 18.2 (p.35 lines 12–17 Köhler).

⁷⁶ I wish to thank Professor Abraham J. Malherbe of Yale University for his guidance and many valuable suggestions in the course of writing this paper.