

# SIMON THE SHOEMAKER AND THE PROBLEM OF SOCRATES

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THE NAME SIMON THE SHOEMAKER is not one immediately familiar to specialists in ancient philosophy.<sup>1</sup> This may well be due, in part, to the tendency of many scholars both past and present to deny his historical reality altogether.<sup>2</sup> Ancient sources refer to a Simon who, it is said, was an associate of Socrates and who ran a shoe shop on the edge of the Athenian Agora where Socrates used to come to engage in philosophical discussions with Simon while he worked.<sup>3</sup> However, the fact that neither Plato nor Xenophon mentions Simon has often been cited as an argument against his very existence.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it is reported that the Socratic philosopher Phaedo wrote a dialogue entitled *Simon*,<sup>5</sup> and thus it has been suggested that the later "Simon legend" derived ultimately from a literary character created by Phaedo.<sup>6</sup>

1. The only extended treatment in English is R. F. Hock, "Simon the Shoemaker As an Ideal Cynic," *GRBS* 17 (1976): 41–53. This study is exemplary but apparently little known; C. H. Kahn, for instance, is unaware of its existence when he discusses Simon in *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* (Cambridge, 1996). R. S. Brumbaugh's "Simon and Socrates," *AncPhil* 11 (1991): 151–52, although useful, is only a short notice primarily concerned with the recent archaeological discoveries and does not mention Hock either. Note also R. Goulet, "Trois cordonniers philosophes," in *Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition*, ed. M. Joyal (Aldershot, England, 1997), 119–25; H. Hobein, "Σίμων (no. 6)," *RE* 3A.1 (1927): 163–73; plus a handful of earlier works (up to 1814) listed in A. Patzer, *Bibliographia Socratica* (Freiburg and Munich, 1985), nos. 327, 1951–53.

2. See, e.g., E. Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, trans. O. J. Reichel (London, 1868), 210: "He is probably altogether an imaginary person"; W. D. Ross, "Simon," *OCD*<sup>2</sup> (1970): 991: "His very existence as a real personage is not quite certain"; Kahn, *Plato* (n. 1 above), p. 10, n. 18: "I can see no good reason to believe in his historical reality."

3. All of the important ancient testimonia are now gathered together in G. Giannantoni's *Socratis et Socraticorum reliquiae* (Naples, 1990) (hereafter, *SSR*), VI B 87–93. A number of further references not in *SSR* can be found in the Aristotelian commentators (collected in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* [hereafter, *CAG*]). Hock ("Simon" [n. 1 above]), notes one such reference in Ammonius in *Int.* (205.4–7 Busse, *CAG* 4.5), which Goulet ("Trois cordonniers" [n. 1 above], p. 123, n. 15) supplements with others in Anon. in *Soph. el.* (11.14–17 Hayduck, *CAG* 23.4); David *Proleg.* (42.27–32 Busse, *CAG* 18.2); Philoponus in *An. post.* (350.31–33 Wallies, *CAG* 13.3); and Ps.-Alexander (= Michael of Ephesus) in *Soph. el.* (40.22–27 Wallies, *CAG* 2.3). In *Int.* 20b35–36, 21a14–15 and *Soph. el.* 177b14–15, Aristotle uses the example of a shoemaker when discussing predicates ("if someone is good and a shoemaker it does not follow that he is a good shoemaker"), and these commentators identify this as a reference to Simon (see Goulet, 122–23, for further discussion). Goulet also draws attention to a reference to a shoemaker called "Heron" in Aelius Theon's *Progymnasmata* that, in the light of an alternative reading in an Armenian MS, may plausibly be amended to "Simon" (see the new Budé edition by M. Patillon and G. Bognonesi [Paris, 1997], 77). Finally, Simon's name appears in a list of names in *PRoss.-Georg.* 13, 1.19 (see *Corpus dei papiri filosofici Greci e Latini* [Florence, 1989–], 1.1.87–88).

4. See, e.g., Zeller, *Socrates* (n. 2 above), p. 210, n. 5; and Ross in *OCD*<sup>2</sup> (n. 2 above).

5. See Diog. Laert. 2.105 and *Suda*, s.v. Φαίδων (both *SSR* III A 8). Note also the reference to Phaedo's portrait of Simon in *Socraticorum epistulae* (hereafter, *Socr. ep.*) 13.1 = *SSR* IV A 224 = VI B 92. On *Socr. ep.*, see n. 29 below.

6. See, e.g., Kahn, *Plato*, 10, following U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, "Phaidon von Elis," *Hermes* 14 (1879): 187–93; repr. in his *Kleine Schriften*, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1969), 41–48.

The situation has somewhat changed since the discovery of the remains of a shop near the Tholos on the southwest edge of the Agora, the floor scattered with hobnails, containing a base from a pot with "Simon's" (ΣΙΜΟΝΟΣ) inscribed upon it.<sup>7</sup> Archaeologists commenting upon this discovery have been keen to identify its owner with the Simon mentioned in the literary sources as a companion of Socrates,<sup>8</sup> but scholars primarily concerned with ancient philosophy have tended to remain doubtful.<sup>9</sup> While these archaeological remains are certainly suggestive, it is of course difficult to claim with any certainty that they relate to the literary Simon.

Simon's reputation relies principally upon the claim made by Diogenes Laertius that he was the first to write "Socratic dialogues" (Σωκρατικοὶ λόγοι).<sup>10</sup> Diogenes reports that these were also known as "shoemaker's dialogues" (σκυτικοὶ λόγοι) or simply "shoemaker's" (σκυτικούς).<sup>11</sup> These, Diogenes says, were more or less notes of actual conversations with Socrates rather than literary compositions. A total of thirty-three are named and it is reported that they all fitted into a single volume or roll (βιβλίον). It has been noted that for this to be possible each one would have been equivalent to just under the length of two Stephanus pages of Plato, making each one shorter than one of the typical sections of the Socratic *Memorabilia* of Xenophon.<sup>12</sup> As with Simon himself, the reality of these lost works has also been doubted,<sup>13</sup> but the lack of any order in Diogenes' list and the repetition of some titles point against its being a fabrication.<sup>14</sup>

7. See D. B. Thompson, "The House of Simon the Shoemaker," *Archaeology* 13 (1960): 234–40; H. A. Thompson and R. E. Wycherley, *The Agora of Athens*, The Athenian Agora, 14 (Princeton, 1972), 173–74, with pl. 88; J. M. Camp, *The Athenian Agora* (London, 1986; rev. 1992), 145–47.

8. See the works listed in the previous note. In the light of these finds, note also Simon Hornblower's revision of Ross's assessment in "Simon," *OCD*<sup>3</sup> (1996): 1409: "He is never mentioned by Plato or Xenophon, but his existence has now been confirmed by the discovery of . . . Simon's cobbler shop." As for the silence of Plato and Xenophon, Thompson, "House of Simon" (n. 7 above), 239–40, offers an explanation. She dates the shoemaking activity in the Athenian workshop to c. 450–410 B.C.E. and Simon's cup to c. 450–425 B.C.E., suggesting c. 420–415 B.C.E. as the probable time of Simon's death. While Socrates' pupils who knew Simon—Antisthenes, Alcibiades, and Phaedrus—were all born c. 450 B.C.E., Plato and Xenophon were both not born until c. 430. If Simon died around 420, then it is unlikely that either Plato or Xenophon would have known him personally.

9. See, e.g., Kahn, *Plato*, 10; and D. Clay, "The Origins of the Socratic Dialogue," in *The Socratic Movement*, ed. P. A. Vander Waerdt (Ithaca, 1994), 23–47, who, although apparently convinced in the body of his text, writes in a note that the connection between these finds and the Simon associated with Socrates is "made at best out of a gossamer web of hope" (p. 32, n. 19). A more positive assessment is made by Brumbaugh, "Simon" (n. 1 above), 151.

10. See Diog. Laert. 2.123 = SSR VI B 87. Kahn (*Plato*) doubts the historical reality of Simon (p. 10), and suggests an otherwise unknown Alexamenos of Teos as the creator of the Socratic dialogue (p. 1), citing a fragment from Aristotle's *De poetis* (Athenaeus 505c = frag. 72 Rose<sup>3</sup> = Ross [OCT], p. 69; see also Diog. Laert. 3.48). This passage does *not* say, however, that Alexamenos invented the *Socratic* dialogue, but simply that he wrote *imitative* dialogues before the Socratic dialogues and before Plato.

11. See Diog. Laert. 2.122–23 = SSR VI B 87, simply "σκυτικούς," and 2.105 = SSR III A 8, "σκυτικούς λόγους" (attributed to Aeschines and, implicitly, Phaedo). In his Loeb edition Hicks translates σκυτικούς as "leathern" while Brumbaugh, "Simon," 151, offers "the leather dialogues." Clay, "Origins" (n. 9 above), 32, suggests "Cobbler's Talk" or "Conversations at the Cobbler's Shop." I suggest that simply "shoemaker's dialogues" might be more appropriate.

12. See Brumbaugh, "Simon," 151–52.

13. See, e.g., Zeller, *Socrates*, p. 210, n. 5; and G. Grote, *Plato and the Other Companions of Sokrates* (London, 1867), 3:470, n. "k".

14. See Brumbaugh, "Simon," 151–52.

Xenophon reports that because youths were not allowed to enter the Agora they used to gather in workshops surrounding the Agora and Socrates used to frequent these shops in order to converse with them.<sup>15</sup> Shops such as Simon's appear to have functioned as informal classrooms for Socrates. Euthydemus, Phaedrus, and Alcibiades are all named by the ancient sources as regular visitors.<sup>16</sup> It is also tempting to speculate that Socrates enjoyed the company of Simon because, as a craftsman (τεχνίτης), he was one of the few individuals that Socrates could find who possessed some form of secure knowledge and expertise (τέχνη). Simon's mastery of the art of shoemaking would have been just the sort of expertise that, in the *Apology*, Socrates held up as the only example of genuine knowledge that he could find.<sup>17</sup> Thus Simon would have been a living example of a form of knowledge analogous to the form of knowledge that Socrates himself was searching for, namely the art (τέχνη) of taking care of one's soul (ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῆς ψυχῆς).<sup>18</sup>

These few remarks constitute probably all that it is possible to say about Simon. He is an interesting and sadly neglected associate of Socrates but he does not appear to be of any great significance for the history of ancient philosophy. However, for a number of later philosophers the name "Simon the Shoemaker" came to be associated with a certain way of life, a specifically philosophical way of life. For these later philosophers, Simon's way of life was considered to be exemplary of what it meant to be a follower of Socrates.<sup>19</sup> By examining the ancient traditions surrounding Simon, then, it might be possible to learn something about the nature of Socrates' philosophical project. What follows is offered as a contribution to the project of uncovering the philosophy of the historical Socrates, or at least how that philosophy was understood by some of his immediate followers, in particular the Cynics.<sup>20</sup> In the next section I shall consider Simon as a Cynic role model. Then, in the following section, I shall suggest how this Cynic appropriation of Simon might contribute to the debate surrounding what has come to be known as "the problem of Socrates."

15. See Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.1: "So first of all, realizing that because of his youth Euthydemus did not yet go into the Agora if he wanted to conduct any business, but took up his position in a saddler's shop close by, Socrates went to the shop himself with some of his friends" (πρῶτον μὲν, αἰσθανόμενος αὐτὸν διὰ νεότητα οὐκ εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν εἰσιόντα, εἰ δὲ τι βούλοιο διαπράξασθαι, καθίζοντα εἰς ἡμιποιεῖόν τι τῶν ἐγγύς τῆς ἀγορᾶς, εἰς τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὸς ἦεν τῶν μεθ' αὐτοῦ τινας ἔχων). For "saddler's shop" (ἡμιποιεῖον) one might read "any shop engaged in leather working," from which it is only a short step to "shoemaker's workshop." Indeed, Clay, "Origins," 32, suggests this is a reference to a cobbler's shop. M. L. Lang (*Socrates in the Agora* [Princeton, 1978]) thinks it "most probable" that this is a reference to Simon. Note also *Mem.* 3.10.1, where Socrates is presented in philosophical discussion in a painter's workshop.

16. All three are named in *Socr. ep.* 13.1 = SSR IV A 224. For Euthydemus see Xenophon (n. 15 above); for Alcibiades see Ael. *VH* 2.1 = SSR I C 33.

17. See Pl. *Ap.* 22c-e.

18. *Ibid.* 30a-b. In the Platonic dialogues the example of a shoemaker (σκυτοτόμος) often appears as an example of an expert (τεχνίτης); see, e.g., *Prt.* 319d, *Grg.* 447d, *Resp.* 333a, 397e, 443c, *Thr.* 146d; note also *Alc.* 128b-c; Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.22. That Socrates constantly used the example of a shoemaker is stated explicitly by Callicles in *Grg.* 491a and Alcibiades in *Symp.* 221e.

19. See, e.g., the letter attributed to Xenophon in the *Socr. ep.* (18.2 = SSR VI B 91).

20. The fragments of the Cynics are also collected together in SSR, Part V. No anthology in English exists, but note the collection translated into French by L. Paquet, *Les Cyniques grecs* (Paris, 1992). For a general survey of the Cynics see D. R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism from Diogenes to the 6th century A.D.* (1937; reprinted as 2d ed., with foreword and bibliography by M. Griffin, London, 1998). The most important recent work in English can be found in R. B. Branham and M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, eds., *The Cynics* (Berkeley, 1996).

## SIMON THE CYNIC ROLE MODEL

In a text entitled *That the Philosopher Ought to Converse with Rulers* (Περὶ τοῦ ὅτι μάλιστα τοῖς ἡγεμόσι δεῖ τὸν φιλόσοφον διαλέγεσθαι) Plutarch follows the example of Plato and suggests that by associating with men of power, a philosopher may be able to influence legislation and the administration of justice. By doing this, he suggests, it will be possible for philosophy to have a direct impact upon the world. However, Plutarch reports that many contemporary philosophers would reject such a course of action. Instead he suggests that a more common thought in the minds of his philosophical contemporaries is the desire to be transformed into Simon the Shoemaker: "Let me become Simon the Shoemaker so that I might converse with philosophers such as Socrates."<sup>21</sup>

Simon's status as an exemplar of a life away from the world of politics can also be seen in an anecdote preserved by Diogenes Laertius in which he is said to have rejected an offer of money from Pericles to become his "court philosopher." Instead Simon is said to have preferred to hold on to his independence and freedom of speech (παρρησία).<sup>22</sup> In this Simon may be seen to follow the example of Socrates, who is reported to have rejected similar offers from a number of rulers.<sup>23</sup>

Both Socrates and Simon, then, rejected life at court in favor of the cobbler's workshop. Socrates was not the only philosopher to spend his days in conversation with a shoemaker. Inspired by his example, a number of later philosophers, especially Cynics, started a tradition of associating with shoemakers.<sup>24</sup> Of particular importance here is a passage deriving from the Stoic Zeno's collection of anecdotes about his Cynic teacher Crates:<sup>25</sup>

Ζήνων ἔφη Κράτητα ἀναγινώσκειν ἐν σκυτείῳ καθήμενον τὸν Ἀριστοτέλους Προτρεπτικόν, ὃν ἔγραψε πρὸς Θεμισώνα τὸν Κυπρίων βασιλεῖα λέγων ὅτι οὐδενὶ πλείω ἀγαθὰ ὑπάρχει πρὸς τὸ φιλοσοφῆσαι· πλουτόν τε γὰρ πλείστον αὐτὸν ἔχειν ὥστε δαπανᾶν εἰς ταῦτα, ἔτι δὲ δόξαν ὑπάρχειν αὐτῷ. ἀναγινώσκοντος δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸν σκυτεῖα ἔφη προσέχειν ἅμα ράπτοντα, καὶ τὸν Κράτητα εἰπεῖν "ἐγὼ μοι δοκῶ, ὦ Φιλίσκε, γράφειν πρὸς σὲ προτρεπτικόν· πλείω γὰρ ὁρῶ σοι ὑπάρχοντα πρὸς τὸ φιλοσοφῆσαι (ἢ) ὃ ἔγραψεν Ἀριστοτέλης."

Zeno said that Crates was sitting in a shoemaker's shop and reading aloud Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, which he had written for Themison, the Cyprian king. In it he said that no one had more advantages for being a philosopher, for he had great wealth so that he could

21. See Plut. *Mor.* 776b = SSR VI B 90; I paraphrase here. The full Greek text reads Σίμων οὖν γένομαι ὁ σκυτοτόμος ἢ Διονύσιος ὁ γραμματιστὴς ἐκ Περικλέους ἢ Κάτωνος, ἵνα μοι προσδιαλέγηται καὶ προσκαθίζῃ ὡς Σωκράτης ἐκεῖνῳ. It contains a number of disputed readings, on which see Hock, "Simon," p. 44, n. 18. Fowler's Loeb translation ends with "as Socrates did with Pericles." As Hock notes, this must be wrong. The context suggests that ἐκεῖνῳ (in Fowler) or ἐκείνοῖς (printed in SSR) refers to Simon and/or Dionysius.

22. Diog. Laert. 2.123 = SSR VI B 87.

23. See, e.g., Diog. Laert. 2.25 = SSR I D 1.

24. For a detailed account see Hock, "Simon," 46–48. Beyond the example of Crates and Philiscus (to be discussed shortly), another pairing of Cynic philosopher and shoemaker can be found in Lucian's *Cataplus*. Hock presents this as evidence for the existence of an established literary convention of joining Cynics and shoemakers.

25. Zeno is said to have produced a collection of anecdotes (Χρεῖται) about Crates; see Diog. Laert. 6.91 = SVF 1.272 = SSR V H 40.

spend money on this activity and still have his reputation intact. And Zeno said that while Crates was reading, the shoemaker was attentive but all the while kept on with his stitching. And Crates said, "It seems to me, Philiscus, that I should write a *Protrepticus* for you, since I see that you have more advantages for being a philosopher than the man for whom Aristotle wrote."<sup>26</sup>

From this passage one may draw three points. The first is that, following the example of Socrates, the Cynic Crates spent his time engaged in philosophical conversations in a cobbler's workshop. The second is the reference to Aristotle's *Protrepticus* which informs us that Aristotle thought that the king Themison was in an ideal position to engage in philosophy and that Aristotle sought to befriend the king by dedicating this work to him. The third, and perhaps most important, point is that Crates and his shoemaker friend Philiscus were discussing this text by Aristotle with reference to the question concerning the ideal conditions in which one might pursue philosophy.

The contrast between the behavior of Crates and the advice of Aristotle is striking. While Aristotle holds up the life of the king as ideal for the practice of philosophy and consequently associates with such individuals, Crates associates with a humble shoemaker, whom he, in turn, may well have thought had a way of life ideal for pursuing philosophy.<sup>27</sup> The precedents are obvious: Aristotle follows the example of Plato (with Dionysius) while Crates follows the example of Socrates (with Simon). While Aristotle courts men of power, Socrates, Simon, and Crates reject such a life, preferring instead to spend their time in private, and thus uncensored, conversation. This clearly reflects the contrasting attitudes towards external goods held by Aristotle and the Cynics. For Aristotle the successful philosophical life requires not just excellence (*ἀρετή*) but also certain external goods such as wealth and social standing. The Cynics, on the other hand, affirm that excellence (*ἀρετή*) is itself enough to ensure a good life (*εὐδαιμονία*), a life that for them requires nothing more than the strength of a Socrates (*Σωκρατικὴς ἰσχύος*).<sup>28</sup>

This debate about whom the philosopher should associate with is developed in a series of letters that purport to be by a number of the Socratic philosophers, the *Socraticorum epistulae*.<sup>29</sup> In a correspondence between Antisthenes and Aristippus the question of whether the philosopher should

26. Teles apud Stob. 4.32.21 = frag. IV B in O. Hense, *Teletis reliquiae* (Tübingen, 1909), 46.6–14. Text and translation in E. N. O'Neil, *Teles: The Cynic Teacher* (Missoula, 1977), 48–51. I follow O'Neil's translation, slightly modified. This anecdote is reported by Zeno and is thus SVF 1.273. It contains an anecdote about Crates and is thus SSR V H 42. It also includes a reference to Aristotle's *Protrepticus* and is thus Arist. frag. 50 Rose<sup>3</sup> = Ross (OCT), pp. 26–27. It is cited and translated by Dudley, *History* (n. 20 above), 45 (but incorrectly referenced), and Hock, "Simon," 47. It is reported in the context of a discussion about whether philosophers should associate with rulers. This is similar to the context of Plutarch's reference to Simon, but here Teles and Plutarch stand on opposing sides of the debate.

27. For Aristotle see A.-H. Chroust, "What Prompted Aristotle to Address the *Protrepticus* to Themison?" *Hermes* 94 (1966): 202–7. Hock, "Simon," 47, suggests that Crates' decision to associate with a shoemaker was a conscious act of protest against Aristotle's behavior. More likely is that it was conscious emulation of Socrates.

28. See Diog. Laert. 6.11 = SSR V A 134, a phrase attributed to Antisthenes.

29. These letters are generally agreed to be spurious. Text and translation in A. J. Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles* (Missoula, Mont., 1977), 217–307. Translations from the letters follow those in this edition, although occasionally modified.

associate with rulers is vigorously debated.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Simon himself appears in these letters, first as a topic of discussion, and later as a participant in the correspondence, exemplifying the Cynic position argued for by Antisthenes. Antisthenes opens the debate by attacking Aristippus for court-  
ing the ruler Dionysius:

Οὐκ ἔστι τοῦ φιλοσόφου τὸ παρὰ τυράννοις ἀνδράσι εἶναι καὶ Σικελικαῖς προσανέχειν  
τραπέζαις, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὸ ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ καὶ αὐτάρκων ἐφίεσθαι.

It is not right for a philosopher to associate with tyrants and to devote himself to Sicilian tables. Rather, he should live in his own country and strive for self-sufficiency.<sup>31</sup>

As the correspondence continues it becomes clear that Antisthenes' model for the life of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) is Simon. The reply from Aristippus, supposedly written from the court of Dionysius, is scathing and ironic. He opens the letter by admitting his "wretchedness":

Πῶς γὰρ οὐ μέλλομεν κακοδαμονεῖν ὄντες παρὰ τυράννῳ καὶ ὁσημέραι ἐσθιοντες καὶ  
πίνοντες πολυτελείᾳ καὶ ἀλειφόμενοι τινι τῶν εὐωδεστάτων μύρων καὶ σύροντες ἐσθῆ-  
τας μακρὰς ἐκ Τάραντος; καὶ οὐδεὶς με ἐξαιρήσεται τῆς Διονυσίου ὀμότητος . . . νῦν δ'  
αὖ καὶ τὸ κακὸν εἰς τὸ δεινότερον οἴχεται, ὅπου δεδῶρηται γυναῖκας Σικελικὰς τρεῖς  
ἀναλέκτους τὸ κάλλος καὶ ἀργύρια πάμπολλα.

How could we not be wretched since we live with a tyrant, and daily eat and drink extravagantly, and are anointed with one of the sweetest-smelling perfumes, and drag about long Tarentine cloaks? And no one will free me from this cruelty of Dionysius . . . Now, moreover, the evil has become more terrible since he has given me three Sicilian women of exquisite beauty and a large amount of money.<sup>32</sup>

There appears to be little comparison between the unwashed and barefoot life of Antisthenes and that enjoyed by Aristippus. As Aristippus puts it a little later in the same letter, Antisthenes is welcome to his "same filthy cloak summer and winter, as is fitting for a free man living democratically in Athens."<sup>33</sup> Aristippus admits that he has "no desire to suffer hunger or cold, or to be held in ill repute or to grow a long beard."<sup>34</sup> However, as Hock notes, Aristippus may well have traded his freedom of speech (παρρησία) for his food and wine, beautiful women, and money.<sup>35</sup> For Antisthenes, such a trade would have been unacceptable.

As the debate continues Simon himself is drawn into the correspondence. It is immediately clear which side of the debate he supports, saying in a letter to Aristippus that he is happy to cut leather straps "for admonishing foolish men who think that they are living according to the teaching of Socrates when

30. See esp. *Socr. ep.* 8 and 9.

31. *Socr. ep.* 8 = *SSR* V A 206.

32. *Socr. ep.* 9.1 = *SSR* IV A 222.

33. *Socr. ep.* 9.2 = *SSR* IV A 222: τὸν αὐτὸν τρίβωνα θέρους τε καὶ χειμῶνος ἔχε ῥυπῶντα, ὥς πρέπει τῷ ἐλευθέρῳ καὶ ζῶντι [ἐν Αῠθῆναις] δημοκρατικῶς.

34. *Socr. ep.* 9.3 = *SSR* IV A 222: πεινῆν καὶ ῥιγοῦν καὶ ἀδοξεῖν οὐκ ἠθέλησα οὐδὲ πάγωνα τρέφειν μέγαν.

35. See Hock ("Simon," 45–46), who surveys a number of passages in Diogenes Laertius in which philosophers are shown in conflict with rulers due to their outspokenness (παρρησία), often endangering their lives.

they are living in great luxury.”<sup>36</sup> In his reply to Simon, Aristippus draws attention to the irony of the situation in which the barefooted Antisthenes, who exhorts the youth to follow his simple shoeless way of life, spends his time in the company of a shoemaker.<sup>37</sup> In this Antisthenes was, of course, following the example of Socrates himself.<sup>38</sup>

For some unknown reason, then, there developed a tradition involving shoeless Cynic philosophers spending their time in the company of shoemakers. Yet perhaps this is not as odd as it might at first appear. Whether it was between Socrates and Simon or Crates and Philiscus, one can see that such a relationship would have been one free from any ulterior motive, existing purely for the mutual benefit of philosophical discussion. Socrates, well known for his barefoot lifestyle, would have at last found someone to talk with in the environs of the Agora who was not intent upon selling him anything.

#### SIMON THE IDEAL SOCRATIC

So far I have surveyed the ancient sources for Simon and outlined his role in what appears to have been a primarily Cynic debate concerning whether philosophers should associate with rulers. As we have seen, their response to this question was an emphatic “no”; instead, philosophers should associate with shoemakers.

What I take to be the broader significance of Simon and his later role as a Cynic role model is the way in which these might contribute to our understanding of the philosophy of Socrates. For the Cynics, the figure of Simon became so important because they held him to be the true heir to Socrates.<sup>39</sup> Simon’s life of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) and freedom of speech (παρρησία) embodied what the Cynics took to be the core elements of Socrates’ philosophical way of life. These two notions—self-sufficiency and freedom of speech—are both fairly common Cynic ideas and both are key to understanding the significance later attached to Simon.

Central to the Cynic notion of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) is the rejection of dependence upon external goods and circumstances.<sup>40</sup> For the Cynics, all that is essential to live well is an excellent mental state (ἀρετή). In order to overcome such dependence they engaged in a form of philosophical training (ἄσκησις),<sup>41</sup> but this was in no way “ascetic” in the more recent sense of the

36. *Socr. ep.* 12 = *SSR* III A 16: εἰς νοθεσίαν ἀνθρώπων ἀφρόνων καὶ οὕτω μετὰ πολλῆς χλιδῆς οἰομένων ζῆν παρά τὴν Σωκράτους βουλήν.

37. See *Socr. ep.* 13.2 = *SSR* IV A 224.

38. See, e.g., Pl. *Phdr.* 229a, *Symp.* 174a. In *Ael. VH* 4.11 = *SSR* V B 256 Diogenes the Cynic is reported to have commented that Socrates occasionally wore sandals. It is unclear whether this is to be taken as a criticism of creeping decadence or a justification for occasional indulgence.

39. See, e.g., *Socr. ep.* 18.2 = *SSR* VI B 91.

40. See, e.g., *Diog. Laert.* 6.11, 6.78. For further discussion see A. N. M. Rich, “The Cynic Conception of αὐτάρκεια,” *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser., 9 (1956): 23–29, and M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, *L’Ascèse cynique* (Paris, 1986), 38–40. Note also the text by Teles entitled *On Self-Sufficiency* (Περὶ αὐταρκείας) in Hense, 5–20, and O’Neil, 6–19 (n. 26 above).

41. For a thorough treatment of Cynic ἄσκησις see Goulet-Cazé, *L’Ascèse cynique* (n. 40 above).

word.<sup>42</sup> Instead it was directed towards the cultivation of well-being or happiness (εὐδαιμονία). Thus when Diogenes engaged in his practice of hugging statues in the middle of winter, his aim was to train himself to become indifferent to the cold.<sup>43</sup> With such indifference achieved, he would no longer have needed to concern himself with extra clothing, heating, and all of the other various expenses winter can bring. Of course, total self-sufficiency is impossible, so Cynic αὐτάρκεια became the task of reducing one's needs to a bare minimum. As we have already seen in the *Socraticorum epistulae*, Simon is said to have exhibited this Cynic trait, reducing his material needs to a minimum and providing for those left by way of his shoemaking. The Cynics took Simon's αὐτάρκεια to be something that he had learned from Socrates, and it is something attributed to Socrates by Xenophon.<sup>44</sup>

Holding on to one's freedom of speech, frankness, or outspokenness (παρρησία) was another key Cynic ideal. It is perhaps most clearly illustrated in those anecdotes that bring together Diogenes the Cynic and Alexander the Great. When asked by the then ruler of the known world what he would like above all else, Diogenes replied, "for you to get out of my light" (ἀποσκότησόν μου).<sup>45</sup> As I have already noted, in Diogenes Laertius' biography Simon is reported to have rejected Pericles' offer of a position as a court philosopher by saying that he would not accept money if it meant he had to give up his freedom of speech (παρρησία).<sup>46</sup>

These two Cynic ideals are of course closely interconnected with one another. Only those who have achieved self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) can guarantee their freedom of speech (παρρησία), for only those who are not dependent upon others for their material needs are free to offend and abuse whomsoever they please. Thus Aristippus—as he is portrayed in the *Socraticorum epistulae* at least—may well have been forced by the circumstances in which he found himself to remain silent in front of Dionysius precisely because he was dependent upon him for his luxurious lifestyle.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

As we have seen, the Cynics held Simon's quiet, independent life of making shoes and engaging in private conversation with unwashed and barefoot philosophers to be an ideal way of life. They attributed to Simon two qualities that they thought marked out the ideal philosopher, namely, self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) and freedom of speech (παρρησία). At the same time they held Simon to be the most authentic follower of Socrates. The figure of Simon is important for the Cynics, then, because he forms a bridge between their own

42. Pace Rich, "Cynic Conception" (n. 40 above), 23, who characterizes Cynic αὐτάρκεια as "a stern renunciation of the world." Obviously Cynic training involves a rigorous self-discipline, but not self-denial.

43. See Diog. Laert. 6.23 = SSR V B 174.

44. See, e.g., Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.14, 1.3.5–8, 4.7.1.

45. See, e.g., Diog. Laert. 6.38 = SSR V B 33; with further references to Diogenes and Alexander in SSR V B 31–49.

46. Diog. Laert. 2.123 = SSR VI B 87.



philosophy and that of Socrates. If Simon is the most authentic Socratic and his life is marked by the qualities of self-sufficiency and freedom of speech, then these qualities may well have marked the life of Socrates himself. This is the implicit argument in the Cynic literary tradition that grew up around the name of Simon. In short, the Simon tradition attempts to draw one towards the conclusion that it was in fact Socrates who was "the first dog."<sup>47</sup>

It is of course readily acknowledged that the Cynics were followers of Socrates, but this is often qualified by drawing attention to the ways in which they pushed Socrates' sober and sensible philosophy to an extreme.<sup>48</sup> Plato's reported characterization of Diogenes as a "Socrates gone mad" (Σωκράτης μαινόμενος) could well still serve as a summary of the prevailing scholarly consensus.<sup>49</sup> What the tradition surrounding Simon proposes is that the specifically Cynic qualities of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) and freedom of speech (παρρησία) were not extreme exaggerations of Socrates' philosophy but rather faithful expressions of it.<sup>50</sup> This question concerning who has the greatest claim to be called the true heir of Socrates is one of the explicit themes of the *Socraticorum epistulae*, with Aristippus claiming that he—and not Antisthenes—is the genuine steward of the Socratic teachings (λόγων ἐπιμελητὴν τῶν Σωκρατικῶν).<sup>51</sup> It is within this context that Simon is brought into the correspondence as a Cynic counterexample. It is clear, then, that the Cynic tradition surrounding Simon was directly connected with what has come to be known as "the problem of Socrates."

As I have said, the Cynics claimed that Simon was the most authentic follower of Socrates and that he embodied the specifically Cynic ideals of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) and freedom of speech (παρρησία). The implication made by the Cynic tradition, then, is that these Cynic traits also marked the historical Socrates. It is perhaps unsurprising that the Cynics should make such a claim, and it can hardly be taken as direct evidence for the historical Socrates. Nevertheless it would be rash to dismiss this claim too quickly. The Cynic tradition surrounding Simon draws our attention to that aspect of Socrates' personality that appealed to the Cynics, an aspect that I suggest has been neglected and too often dismissed as merely "Socrates gone mad." A thorough examination of the problem of Socrates must take into account *all* of the surviving evidence, including the Cynic tradition surrounding Simon, however minor or deviant it may appear at first glance.

In order to assess the value of the information that the Simon tradition supplies concerning the philosophy of Socrates, it would be necessary to examine it alongside all of the other various sources. Indeed, the task of assessing the wealth of Socratic testimonia beyond the more obvious sources such as

47. I refer to Goulet-Cazé's "Who Was the First Dog?" in Branham and Goulet-Cazé, *Cynics* (n. 20 above), 414–15, which deals with the question of who should be credited as the founder of the Cynic movement.

48. See, e.g., Dudley, *History*, 27.

49. See Diog. Laert. 6.54; also Ael. VH. 14.33 (both SSR V B 59).

50. For further discussion of the Socratic-Cynic genealogy, see in particular two studies by A. A. Long: "The Socratic Tradition: Diogenes, Crates, and Hellenistic Ethics," in Branham and Goulet-Cazé, *Cynics*, 28–46, and "Socrates in Hellenistic Philosophy," *CQ* 38 (1988): 150–71.

51. *Socr. ep.* 9.1 = SSR IV A 222.

Plato, Xenophon, Aristophanes, and Aristotle has hardly begun.<sup>52</sup> Although it is obviously not possible to begin such a task here, one can at least see that the ancient tradition surrounding Simon the Shoemaker forms an interesting yet neglected strand in the ancient sources for the philosophy of Socrates.

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52. An example of the sort of work yet to be done for much of the surviving material can be found in J. Glucker's exemplary "Socrates in the Academic Books and Other Ciceronian Works," in *Assent and Argument*, ed. B. Inwood and J. Mansfeld (Leiden, 1997), 58–88.