Dialogues and Debates from Late Antiquity to Late Byzantium

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2 *Erostrophus*, a Syriac dialogue with Socrates on the soul

Alberto Rigolio

Some of the earliest known literary works written in Syriac are prose dialogues. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, Bardaisan (154–*c.*222 CE) composed dialogues against religious opponents, which, unfortunately, have not survived. In the same decades, a follower of Bardaisan, possibly his pupil Philip, was the author of the *Book of the Laws of the Countries*, a remarkably ambitious dialogue clearly influenced by Hellenistic literary and philosophical traditions.[1] Later, in the fifth century, John of Apamea composed prose dialogues whose setting is very different from the *Book of the Laws of the Countries*. John of Apamea's dialogues take place within Christian ascetic communities, between a solitary, the main speaker, and Christian brothers who are at different stages of ascetic advancement.[2] At the same time, there circulated Syriac translations of Greek dialogues, such as Gregory the Wonderworker's *To Theopompus on the Impassibility and Passibility of God*[3] and the *Erostrophus*,[4] the work that is the subject of the present chapter.

The *Erostrophus* deals with philosophical themes in a didactic format. The dialogue features two speakers, Socrates and a pupil identified as Erostrophus, and its plot consists entirely of Socrates's response to Erostrophus's questions about the nature of the soul and its relation to the body. The instructional tone of the dialogue is evident in Erostrophus's acceptance of Socrates's explanation, and their conversation can thus be understood as a teacher-pupil relationship. In addition, there is a narrative voice that records the reactions of the speakers during the dialogue and closes the text with an epilogue, as will be pointed out below. However, the contribution of the *Erostrophus* to our understanding of dialogue writing in early Syriac literature and, beyond it, of late antique literature more generally, depends on our grasp of the dialogue's authorship and of the cultural and historical milieu in which the *Erostrophus* originated.

Despite the fact that the figure of Socrates may be a reference to the Platonic tradition, the dialogue was not authored by Plato, and, unfortunately, its origin, in all likelihood late antique, seems to escape any obvious classification. In 1895, Rudolf Hirzel admitted 'vollkommen im Unklaren zu sein' about the origin of the *Erostrophus*, and confessed himself unable to find its appropriate place within his comprehensive history of dialogue literature. Similarly puzzled

by the contents of the work, in 1929 Alfred Taylor was 'not able to understand the confused reply of Socrates'.[5] Despite the difficulty found by modern scholars in relating the *Erostrophus* to known literary and philosophical traditions, the modern reader will nonetheless face a fascinating and bewildering text. The aim of the present paper is thus to provide some guidance by bringing together recent work, and to suggest some links to late antique literature that may contribute to a better understanding of the cultural and historical milieu to which the *Erostrophus* is a witness.

Origins

Unfortunately, no indication of authorship or chronology is provided by the only surviving manuscript (MS British Library Add. 14,658). The manuscript, which contains a remarkable collection of philosophical and moral texts both in the Syriac original and in translation from Greek, was copied during the sixth or seventh centuries, and accordingly the Syriac text of the *Erostrophus* was composed earlier than this date.[6] In addition, the contents of the dialogue indicate that the piece is certainly post-Platonic, but since there are no explicit elements that could point at a more precise chronology, its date of composition has to be assessed on the basis of internal evidence alone.[7]

In all likelihood, the dialogue was originally written in Greek. William Newbold was the only scholar who argued instead that Syriac was the original language of the *Erostrophus*, and, in his view, the School of Bardaisan was a likely milieu in which the work could have been composed.[8] The differences between the *Erostrophus* and Bardesanite doctrines, however, are at least as important as the similarities between them, and Newbold's hypothesis was not taken up by later authors. Conversely, modern scholars have noticed that the *Erostrophus* presents linguistic features that are unusual for a text originally composed in Syriac, and apart from Newbold there is a consensus that the dialogue was translated from Greek.[9] The translation of the *Erostrophus* into Syriac might tentatively be understood within the sixth-century wave of translations from Greek which included the transmission of philosophical texts, but archaic features of the language make an earlier chronology also possible.[10]

The process of translation could explain at least some of the idiosyncratic features of the text of the *Erostrophus*. It is possible to conceive that the syntax of the dialogue, which is often extremely elliptical, may be the result of a concern to follow the Greek original closely. The loss of the original, however, makes it difficult to assess the overall extent to which the language of the *Erostrophus* mirrors the style of the Greek, and, in addition, one cannot decide whether the process of translation might explain the allusive and concise language that Socrates employs, which seems overall to be unsatisfactory for a philosophical text. Likewise, there are not enough elements on the basis of which to blame the process of translation for the apparent lack of a more comprehensive explanation by Socrates, which would have no doubt benefited the modern reader.

Contents

The dialogue deals primarily with the two questions that Erostrophus puts to Socrates in the opening section of the text: 'First, (I beg you to) tell me what the soul is; secondly, I intend to ask you whether its constitution is everlasting'.[11] In order to answer the questions, Socrates produces a fairly extensive treatment of the nature of the soul that makes up most of the dialogue. He asserts that, before dealing with the soul, he intends to talk about an entity that he initially identifies as 'Greatness and Power' (161.5: ܪܒܘܬܐ ܘܚܝܠܐ), but later only as 'Power' (ܚܝܠܐ). A fundamental feature of Power (possibly δύναμις) is that 'it does not waste away and is not changed, and it neither decreases nor increases' (161.5–6); but, at the same time, Power has a creative faculty, and it should probably be identified as a divine principle (162.11). This principle is closely related to (or, possibly, fully identified as) what Erostrophus and Socrates elsewhere refer to as the 'primal Root' or 'primal Principle' (ܥܩܪܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ), 'from which'—Socrates explains – 'you [Erostrophus] came into being' (161.10; 162.5–6 for the close relation between the two).

In addition to the creative faculty, the primal Root or Principle plays a fundamental role in sensory perceptions and, it seems, in the intellectual activity of human beings. It is argued that, while sight, hearing and speaking (ܡܠܬܐ, possibly λόγος, which should also be understood as 'reason' as in 161.20–21) can appear to be divided among the sense organs within the body, they nonetheless have the same single Root or Principle (161.28–29). In addition, it is explained that the primal Root connects and extends everywhere, and, in a simile, is like a tree whose branches facing different directions represent men (162.3–8). In fact, as Socrates explains, 'all' (ܟܠ; or possibly τὸ ὅλον 'the universe') is ultimately made up of (or 'by') the Power (or, if they coincide as it seems, the primal Root or Principle) (162.11).

Before treating the soul, however, Socrates describes the composition of the body, possibly because – he argues – 'the soul without a body would be both invisible and unmovable'.[12] According to Socrates, the body is made up of the four elements (στοιχεῖα) – fire, water, air and earth – which are intermingled in a balanced mixture (162.14–21 with 166.10–11). An excess or shortage of any of the elements produces a damaging effect on the body, and, on this occasion, Socrates redirects Erostrophus to the books written by physicians if he wants to know exactly what bodily organs can be harmed by an imbalance of the element (162.21–30). Instead, Socrates himself is interested in *how* (ܐܝܟܢܐ) the causes (ܥܠܠܬܐ) derive from the elements of the body (163.4 with 162.25–163.16).

Here Socrates moves on to an excursus on fire. It is argued that fire is the first and the chief among the four elements (165.3), and, most importantly, the soul 'holds' a part of this element (163.19; 164.5). Fire acts as nourishment for the soul, and Socrates explains this concept through a comparison between the Sun and the human body, both of which contain the element of fire. The reason why the human body is not tormented by heat or cold in spring and autumn, but is so tormented in summer and winter, is because the heat of the Sun is moderate during

the two middle seasons. During spring and autumn, the power of the element of fire in the Sun is mild, and it thus produces a temperate amenity that is appropriate for the wellbeing of humans. In like manner, the power of the fire that is in the body and that the soul holds is not constant, but varies throughout human life, not unlike the way in which the intensity of the Sun varies throughout the year. As a result, during childhood the power of the soul is moderate, during adulthood the power of the soul increases and during old age the power of the soul weakens. In addition, since fire is fundamental to keep the elements together and to form the body, when the fire that is intermingled in the soul is dissolved, the remaining three elements likewise dissolve.

Finally, Socrates provides a definition of the soul: 'The mixture of the four elements, and the mingling of one with the others – he says – should be seen and called soul'.[13] Socrates, however, is not especially concerned with the terms that can be used to designate the soul, and he invites Erostrophus to 'give the soul the names you want. If you want to name it fire, name it so; if you want to name it soul, name it so; if you want to name it mind (perhaps νοῦς), name it so; or if you want to name it *physis*, name it so'.[14] Also, the soul is everlasting (166.4; 166.28), but it had an origin, and this origin is in the Power. In fact, originally the Power stirred the soul, and removed the soul from itself; and the soul, then, forged and formed the body out of the four elements, according to the *logos* (ܡܠܬܐ) and according to the position of the celestial bodies (166.10–15). A simile that Socrates uses to explain the action of the soul is that of milk that needs rennet to coagulate (166.24). Also, the soul pervades 'everything' (possibly again τὸ ὅλον 'the universe') and, since the soul holds a 'seed' of Power in itself, it follows that the Power is in everything (162.19–26). Despite its temporary mixture with a body that is dissolvable, however, the Power itself is not changed (166.25–30).

At the close of his discourse, Socrates moves on to a brief section dealing with ethics. Here he strongly condemns human pleasures, and relates the moral behaviour of human beings to the physical 'holding' function of the soul within the body (166.30–167.11). The dialogue closes with a narrative passage that describes Erostrophus's satisfaction with the instruction that he has received from Socrates and remarks on the benefit that all those who attended the dialogue gained from Socrates's words. In a simile, the discourse and the philosophy of Socrates are compared to two springs of water that make the land fertile and thus bring forth abundant produce.

Philosophical background

Finding a work in Syriac underpinned by Greek philosophical traditions prompts a preliminary question about the religious affiliation of its author. Is the dialogue the work of a Christian author, perhaps an attempt to bring together Greek philosophical traditions with Christianity? Or is it simply the work of a non-Christian? The manuscript in which it is preserved contains philosophical works of non-Christian origin, such as translations of Aristotle and Porphyry, as well as Christian works as diverse as the Bardesanite *Book of the Laws of the Countries* and the adaptation

of Ps.-Justin's *Oratio ad Graecos*, so either scenario seems theoretically possible. The dialogue, however, does not contain explicit references to Christianity or to religious paganism, and a definitive answer on the religious affiliation of the author on the basis of the contents of the text requires further analysis.

A problem that Christian readers of the *Erostrophus* might have encountered is the issue of determinism. It is remarkable that the author accepts at least some degree of determinism in the way in which the soul forges the body out of the four elements. In particular, the 'seven Leaders and Servants', which should in all likelihood be identified with celestial bodies, play a role that can possibly be understood as fate. The *logos* (ܡܠܬܐ) also plays a part in determining what the soul should form, but, unfortunately, from the text it is not possible to determine what, and if so what exactly, is left to human will (166.10–14). Such a position on destiny may appear to be in contrast with many Christian views, but it might not be too dissimilar from the downsized role credited to fate in the *Book of the Laws of the Countries*, which is preserved in the same manuscript.

Similarly, the apparent materialism that Socrates proposes and the definition of the soul merely as a mixture of the four elements may appear at first sight incompatible with Christian belief, but we are aware that some Christians, most notably Tertullian, believed in the materiality of the soul.[15] The dialogue makes no reference to the Scriptures, or to patristic literature, but there is the possibility that a passage is reminiscent of a line from *Psalm* 134(135).[16] Whether the author of the dialogue was attempting to reconcile notions of Greek philosophy with Christianity remains difficult to establish on the basis of the text that survives, but, if this was the case, this enterprise was less explicit than, for instance, Nemesius of Emesa's *De natura hominis* (late fourth century), which brought together different philosophical traditions in the attempt to find a harmonisation with Christianity.[17]

However, the identification of the doctrine of the *Erostrophus* with an established philosophical tradition of non-Christian origin is likewise problematic. The character of Socrates may recall the Platonic tradition, but the view that the element of fire is in the soul (164.21) and intermingled with the soul (165.5), as well as the belief that the soul is a mixture of the four elements (165.25), seems difficult to reconcile with the doctrine of the incorporeal soul that underpins Platonism. The doctrine that the soul without the body is immovable (162.15) likewise marks a distance from Platonism and appears instead closer to Aristotelian philosophy, according to which the soul cannot be moved at all, except as a passenger in the body.[18]

The author of the *Erostrophus* accepts the view that the body is composed of the four elements, and believes that any disequilibrium in the proportion of the elements would compromise its wellbeing. This doctrine appears to be in accordance with the Hippocratic and Galenic tradition; and the definition of the soul as a 'mixture' may likewise derive from Galen. Although to some extent reluctant to a provide a definition of the soul, in the treatise *The Capacities of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body*, Galen claimed to follow Aristotle when he described the substance of the soul as a κρᾶσις, 'mixture', of the four elements.[19] Again, Galen's view of the soul as a mixture is strongly rejected by Nemesius of Emesa.[20]

Stoic philosophy stands out as another important source of influence, as Alfred Taylor had originally suggested.[21] It is remarkable that Socrates provides a long excursus on fire, which he describes as the first and the chief among the four elements (165.3); and, in addition, says that the soul 'holds' a part of this element (163.19; 164.5).[22] These statements would have found many Stoics in agreement. Also, Socrates's unusual description of the Power (25–166.5 ;6–161.1) (ܚܝܠܐ) does not appear too far from a doctrine that Sextus Empiricus attributed to the Stoics. According to this view, there exists a 'Power (δύναμις) that is in itself self-moving, which would be divine and eternal'; and this 'Power that moves matter and imposes on it, in an orderly way, generations and changes is eternal. Consequently, it would be God'.[23]

To sum up, an initial overview of the contents of the *Erostrophus* has shown that the author does not adhere to an established philosophical school but rather appears to derive elements from different traditions. Galen and Stoicism stand out as plausible sources of influence on the doctrines expressed in the dialogue, and further analysis would be necessary to identify possible links with the views of early Christian authors on the soul.

Identity of the speakers

The text makes reference to individuals attending the dialogue (167.20), but Socrates and Erostrophus are the only two speaking characters, and their exchanges are occasionally interrupted by short narrative passages that set the scene and hint at their reactions. While the identification of Socrates depends on the tradition of dialogues featuring Socrates, the identification of *Erostrophus* is not exactly straightforward. The <*ṭ*> in the name and the ending in <*-ws*> are indicators of a word of Greek origin, but scholars have not been able to identify an attested Greek name that would be the exact equivalent. In addition, the word <*'rsṭrpws*> can be vocalised in different ways, and the reading *Erostrophus* proposed by Ernest Renan in 1852 and followed by the editor, Paul de Lagarde, in 1858 is based on mere guesswork.[24] That Erostrophus was a made-up name remains a possibility that cannot be ruled out at this stage.

If, instead, <*'rsṭrpws*> is the distortion or a misreading of an originally Greek name, at least two hypotheses have been put forward.[25] The first possibility, which Renan put forward, is that the original name of the speaker was Ἱπποτρόφος, which, in the attested manuscript variant Ἱπποστρόφος, would differ from <*'rsṭrpws*> by only one consonant (ܦ > ܪ). According to the witness of Diogenes Laertius, whose manuscripts attest both variants, Hippotrophus was the title of a dialogue falsely attributed to Plato. The loss of the dialogue, however, precludes further considerations.[26]

The second possibility, which Ryssel put forward, is that Erostrophus was a misreading of the proper name Aristippus. If Ἀρίστιππος was written as <*'rsṭypws*> as Ryssel believes, the names <*'rsṭypws*> and <*'rsṭrpws*> would differ by only one letter. This possibility, however, finds some ground beyond the similarity in the name since Aristippus of Cyrene is a historical figure related to Socrates.

Aristippus was born in Cyrene in *c.*435 BCE and, according to Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius, as a youth was captivated by the fame of Socrates and moved to Athens to associate with the philosopher. After Socrates's death, Aristippus moved on to establish his own philosophical school, which was later known as Cyrenaic.[27]

According to Diogenes, Aristippus composed a number of philosophical works, some of which had the form of dialogue, but it is especially remarkable that he is the speaker in at least two dialogues with Socrates that are reported by Xenophon.[28] The question is, then, whether the *Erostrophus* may have originally featured Socrates and a young Aristippus of Cyrene, the traditional founder of the Cyrenaic School. On the grounds that Aristippus of Cyrene never dealt with the issue of the soul in his writings, however, in 1958 Gabriele Giannantoni suggested caution in understanding the dialogue as a work related to the Cyrenaic school, and strongly rejected the possibility that the *Erostrophus* might be a work composed by Aristippus himself. In fact, as is shown above, its contents bring together different philosophical traditions and point to a later date.[29]

While there is little common philosophical ground between Erostrophus and the historical Aristippus of Cyrene, some passages in the dialogue nonetheless reveal a link between the two figures at a literary level. Diogenes Laertius reported that 'Aristippus was by birth a citizen of Cyrene and, as Aeschines (of Sphettus) informs us, was drawn to Athens by the fame of Socrates (κατὰ κλέος Σωκράτους)';[30] and a remarkably similar scenario is described in the exchange that opens the dialogue:

> Erostrophus replies: 'O Socrates, your reputation and my will have brought me to you with trepidation, because, out of all men who at present live in the world, you spend your entire life in wisdom and calm, and without desire. My coming to you, Socrates, is because I know that the entire world is amazed at your wisdom. Those who know you rejoice in praising you, and those who do not know you hear about your name and are very much amazed at your deeds.'[31]

In both texts, someone is led to Socrates on account of the philosopher's renown. The similarity may indicate that the author of the *Erostrophus* and Diogenes Laertius ultimately relied on the same literary tradition about Aristippus's travel to Athens, although the fame of Socrates as an attraction for young philosophers may well be a literary topos (see e.g. D.L. 6.10 about Antisthenes).

A stronger link between the two traditions, however, comes from Plutarch. In the *De Curiositate*, Plutarch describes the circumstances in which Aristippus encountered Socrates:

> Aristippus, when he met Ischomachus at Olympia, asked him by what manner of conversation Socrates succeeded in so affecting the young men. When Aristippus had gleaned a few odd seeds and samples of Socrates' talk, he was so moved that he suffered a physical collapse and became quite pale and thin. Finally he sailed for Athens and slaked his burning thirst with draughts from the fountain-head, and engaged in a study of the man and his words and his

> philosophy, of which the end and aim was to come to recognize one's own vices and so rid oneself of them.[32]

Plutarch used the simile of the *fountain-head* to refer to Socrates (διψῶν καὶ διακεκαυμένος ἠρύσατο τῆς πηγῆς), and made specific mention of Socrates's *words and philosophy* (τοῦς λόγους αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν). The same two details are reported in the short narrative section that closes the *Erostrophus*:

> Erostrophus rejoiced in the demonstrations about which Socrates instructed him, and they were not lacking anything from the time when they were put into the mind of Erostrophus except for the wisdom of Socrates, who, in his discourse and in his opinion, resembled two never-failing springs of water which steadily produce abundant water – not in vain or for destruction, but, wherever these waters were going, they were benefiting and bringing forth produce and fruit. In like manner, Socrates' discourse to Erostrophus and to those who were there was not wearisome because it was useful and an eternal and never-ending profit. It was beneficial to those who listened as the water benefits the earth that is fertile and ploughed by the hands of farmers and workers that do not disdain its cultivation. So was the discourse of Socrates very useful for everybody who was listening.[33]

Thus, the closing narrative passage of the *Erostrophus* presents important similarities with the anecdote reported by Plutarch about Aristippus. In particular, it seems to elaborate on the same simile about Socrates's teachings as springs of water, and it likewise expresses the excellence of Socrates's rhetoric as well as his philosophy. The remark about the lack of vices that characterises the behaviour of Socrates in the Plutarchan passage is instead taken up in Erostrophus's words at the beginning of the dialogue, reported above. The question, then, is whether both Plutarch and the author of the *Erostrophus* were relying on the same tradition about Aristippus of Cyrene.

Another element might be adduced in favour of the identification of the literary traditions about Aristippus of Cyrene and the character of our dialogue. The *Phaedo*, Plato's dialogue on the immortality of the soul, contains an important remark about Aristippus. To the question whether Aristippus was present at the dialogue, Phaedo, the reporter of the actual dialogue, responded negatively, for Aristippus – he said – was in Aegina at the time (59C).[34] Thus, according to the tradition, Aristippus did not attend the dialogue on the soul between Socrates and his followers. Conversely, the *Erostrophus* is configured as another dialogue by Socrates on the soul and on the question of its immortality. If < *'rsṭrpws*> should be identified with Aristippus, then one suspects that the *Erostrophus* may have been a deliberate attempt to write a pseudo-epigraphic philosophical dialogue on the soul relying on the same literary traditions of which Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius were aware. If this was the case, the composition of the *Erostrophus* would not be too dissimilar from the enterprise underpinning a similarly instructional and pseudo-epigraphic work in the same manuscript, the pseudo-Aristotelian

On the Universe, in which Aristotle instructs the young Alexander the Great in cosmology.

It is arguable, however, that the choice of Aristippus for the composition of a dialogue with Socrates was not the most obvious one. Xenophon presented Aristippus as an advocate of hedonism whom Socrates harshly admonished, and, in addition, Aristippus is elsewhere represented as actively seeking luxury and amusement as the greatest goals in life.[35] Conversely, the representation of <*'rsṭrpws*> in the dialogue is, overall, positive.[36] The young individual greatly admired Socrates and aimed to pattern his life according to Socrates's moral teaching. There is the possibility, then, that the origin of the dialogue should be sought in the milieu of those authors who presented a generally positive view of Aristippus.[37]

A less controversial and more sympathetic view of Aristippus is found in Plutarch's *Moralia*, where Aristippus is often depicted as an exemplary figure; in Galen, who quotes Aristippus favourably; and in a pseudo-epigraphic collection of letters composed between the first and the third centuries CE, the *Socratic Epistles*, whose anonymous authors made use of Plutarch.[38] Most of the *Epistles* are allegedly written by Socrates or by his pupils, and their real authors drew on existing literary traditions about Socrates and his followers. It is especially remarkable that Aristippus is often mentioned in the letters, and he is either the author or the addressee of a significant portion of them (eight out of thirty-three). In particular, the alleged author of *Socratic Epistle* 16, the very Aristippus, explains that he was not present at Socrates's death and that he heard about the event when he was in Aegina, the same scenario that might have been the basis of the composition of the *Erostrophus*. It seems possible then that the author of the dialogue *Erostrophus* relied on literary traditions about Socrates and Aristippus that circulated in the first centuries CE and are attested in Plutarch, in Diogenes Laertius and in the *Socratic Epistles*.

Conclusion

The *Erostrophus* is a Syriac philosophical dialogue dealing with the nature of the soul, and, in all likelihood, was translated from a Greek original that remains so far unidentified. The contents of the dialogue show that the author brought together different philosophical traditions, among which one can identify Platonic, Stoic and Galenic components. It is thus unlikely that the dialogue was composed earlier than the late second century CE. Also, if the otherwise unidentified name Erostrophus is in fact a misreading of Aristippus, as Ryssel originally conjectured, the dialogue might be understood as an instance of late antique pseudo-epigraphic literature that presents a sympathetic view of the Cyrenaic Aristippus, and its author seems to be aware of literary traditions that are attested in Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius and the *Socratic Epistles*.[39]

Notes

1 Ramelli, *Bardaisan*; Drijvers, *Book of the Laws*; Teixidor, *Bardesane*; Bowersock, *Hellenism*, 31–2 for the similarity with Plato, *Republic*, 327AB; Eusebius of Caesarea,

HE 4.30: Βαρδησάνης, ἱκανώτατός τις ἀνὴρ ἔν τε τῇ Σύρων φωνῇ διαλεκτικώτατος, πρὸς τοὺς κατὰ Μαρκίωνα καί τινας ἑτέρους διαφόρων προϊσταμένους δογμάτων διαλόγους συστησάμενος τῇ οἰκείᾳ παρέδωκεν γλώττῃ τε καὶ γραφῇ μετὰ καὶ πλείστων ἑτέρων αὐτοῦ συγγραμμάτων· οὓς οἱ γνώριμοι (πλεῖστοι δὲ ἦσαν αὐτῷ δυνατῶς τῷ λόγῳ παρισταμένῳ) ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλήνων ἀπὸ τῆς Σύρων μεταβεβλήκασι φωνῆς; trans. Cushman McGiffert, 209–10: 'Bardaisan, a most able man and a most skilful disputant in the Syriac language composed, in the local language and script, dialogues against Marcion's followers and against other authors of differing opinions, together with many other works. His pupils, of whom he had many for he was a powerful defender of the faith, translated them from Syriac into Greek'.

2 John of Apamea, *Dialogues*; Hausherr, *Jean le Solitaire*.

3 Gregory the Wonderworker's *To Theopompus on the Impassibility and Passibility of God* (CPG 1767) is lost in Greek and survives only in Syriac: the text is edited in de Lagarde, *Analecta Syriaca*, 46–64, and translated into English in Slusser, *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus*, 152–73.

4 The *Erostrophus* is edited in de Lagarde, *Analecta Syriaca*, 158–67, from the only manuscript British Library, Add. 14,658 (fols. 150a–155b); the only modern translation of the dialogue is into German in Ryssel, 'Dialog über die Seele'. The title of the dialogue in the manuscript is simply 'Socrates'; and, unfortunately, the manuscript does not contain any other information or marginal notes.

5 Hirzel, *Dialog*, 2:363; Taylor, *Plato*, 553.

6 King, 'Origenism'.

7 More on this below; Giannantoni, *Cirenaici*, 21–2.

8 Newbold, 'Socrates'.

9 Ryssel, 'Dialog über die Seele', 175–7, which put forward the name of Sergius of Resh'aina as a possible translator; Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 169; Brock, 'Syriac Translations', 11; Hugonnard-Roche, 'Érostrophus'.

10 Brock, 'The Commentator Probus'; Hugonnard-Roche, 'La question', for the topic of the soul in the Syriac philosophical tradition. A systematic analysis of the language of the *Erostrophus*, which goes beyond the scope of the present paper, can help establish a more precise chronology.

11 *Er.* 160.2–4: ܗܘܝܘ ܕܬܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܡܕܡܐ ܥܠ ܢܦܫܐ ܡܢܐ ܗܝ. ܕܬܬܝܕܥ ܬܘܒ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܡܢܟ ܕܠܚܠܡ ܗܘ.

12 *Er.* 162.15: ܢܦܫܐ ܕܠܐ ܒܡܢܝܢܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܝܕܐ ܐܦ ܠܐ ܡܬܬܚܡܢܐ.

13 *Er.* 165.25–6: ܘܡܢܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܐܪܒܥܐ ܐܣܛܘܟܣܐ ܘܡܢ ܕܢܗܘܘܢ ܚܕ ܚܝܐ ܡܬܚܝܕܐ ܐܬܪܘܬܐ ܢܦܫܐ.

14 *Er.* 166.2–3: ܫܡܥܬ ܐܦ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܒܢܝ ܚܢܦܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ ܠܗ ܚܝܡ ܠܗ. ܐܝܟ ܒܢܝ ܚܢܦܐ ܢܘܪܐ ܡܘܬܐ. ܘܐܝܟ ܒܢܝ ܚܢܦܐ ܢܦܫܐ ܡܘܬܐ. ܘܐܝܟ ܒܢܝ ܚܢܦܐ ܪܘܚܐ. ܘܐܝܟ ܒܢܝ ܚܢܦܐ ܦܘܣܘܣ.

15 Tertullian, *De Anima*, 7, but also Arnobius, Cassian, and Gennadius, for whom see Verbeke, *Némésius*, l–li.

16 I am grateful to Lucas Van Rompay for this point. *Er.* 161.12: ܕܠܐ ܥܝܢܐ ܚܙܝ ܠܗ ܘܠܐ ܐܕܢܐ ܫܡܥܐ ܠܗ ܘܠܐ ܦܘܡܐ ܡܡܠܠ ܠܗ 'which eyes do not see, ears do not hear, and mouth does not tell' with *Psalm* 134(135).16–17 and *Matt.* 8.18. The meaning of the sentence within its contents, however, remains problematic, and one cannot rule out the possibility that this was an addition by the translator, as in the case of *Psalm* 106(107).15 in the Syriac translation of Themistius' *De Amicitia*, for which see Conterno, 'Retorica pagana', 175–6.

17 Nemesius of Emesa, *De Natura Hominis*, trans. Sharples and van der Eijk, *Nemesius*.

18 Aristotle, *Physics*, 8.6 (259b16–20); Gertz, 'Plato and Aristotle'; Sorabji, *The Philosophy*, 1:217; Sharples and van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, 8.

19 Galen, *The Capacities of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body* 774K = 37M; trans. Singer, *Galen*, 381. See also Galen, *On My Own Opinions*, 15.2, trans. Nutton, *Galen*, 117–19; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On the Soul* with Singer, *Galen*, 359–69, and Sharples and van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, 8; Sorabji, *The Philosophy*, 1:187–93.

20 Nemesius of Emesa, *De Natura Hominis*, 2.23–4, trans. Sharples and van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, 61.

21 Taylor, *Plato*, 553.

22 In describing the Stoics' doctrine, Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos*, 1.234, uses the word τό συνέχον, 'that which holds together', to describe the action of the soul on the body.

23 Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, 7.135–7; Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus dogmaticos*, 3.76 (= *Adversus mathematicos*, 9.76), ed. Mau and Mutschmann 2.232: ἔστι τις ἄρα καθ' ἑαυτὴν αὐτοκίνητος δύναμις, ἥτις ἂν εἴη θεία καὶ ἀΐδιος. [. . .] ἀΐδιος τοίνυν ἐστὶν ἡ κινοῦσα τὴν ὕλην δύναμις καὶ τεταγμένως αὐτὴν εἰς γενέσεις καὶ μεταβολὰς ἄγουσα. ὥστε θεὸς ἂν εἴη αὕτη; with White, 'Stoic Natural Philosophy', 131.

24 Renan, 'Lettre', 299–300; de Lagarde, *Analecta*, xix.

25 The fact that the name is consistently written as <*'rsṭrpws*> in the eighteen examples when it appears in full in the text might not be too great an obstacle since it is not impossible to conceive that a Syriac scribe, perhaps unaware of Greek, may have normalised the name of the same speaker that appeared inconsistent in the text he was copying.

26 This was the suggestion proposed by Renan, 'Lettre', 299–300; Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum*, 3.62, whose manuscripts show the variance between Ἱπποτρόφος and Ἱπποστρόφος. The spurious dialogue *On Virtue* between Socrates and Hippotrophus (ed. Souilhé, *Platon*, 22–34), which the editor does not identify as the Hippotrophus mentioned in D.L. 3.62, does not correspond to our text.

27 This was the explanation proposed by Ryssel, 'Dialog über die Seele', 176 n. 1; Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, 2, chap. 8, with Mann, 'The Life of Aristippus'; Plutarch, *De curiositate*, 516C.

28 Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 2.1 and 3.8.

29 Giannantoni, *Cirenaici*, 21–2; Clay, 'Origins', 31.

30 Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, 2.65, ed. Long: Ἀρίστιππος τὸ μὲν γένος ἦν Κυρηναῖος, ἀφιγμένος δ' Ἀθήναζε, καθά φησιν Αἰσχίνης, κατὰ κλέος Σωκράτους.

31 *Er.* 159.4–10: ܐܪܣܛܝܦܘܣ ܐܡܪ. ܐܘ ܣܘܩܪܛܝܣ. ܥܡܟܐ ܕܝܠܟ ܘܡܢ ܒܢܝܐ ܕܝܠܟ ܒܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܕܬ ܠܘܬܟ. ܡܛܠ ܕܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܢܝ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܒܗܢܐ ܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܐܬܝܗܘܢ ܒܫܡܥܬܐ ܘܫܡܝܐ. ܘܕܠܐ ܪ ܓܠܐ ܟܠܗ ܚܘܫܒܟ ܠܡܫܬܥܝܘ ܐܡܪܬ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܗܢܐ ܡܬܬܒܥܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܘܬܟ ܣܘܩܪܛܝܣ. ܡܛܠ ܕܢܕܥ ܐܢܐ ܕܠܡܐ ܟܠܗ ܒܫܒܝܚܘܬܟ ܡܬܬܕܡܪܝܢ. ܘܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܢܕܥܝܢ ܠܟ ܒܡܫܬܥܝܢܘܬܟ ܣܢܝܢ. ܘܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܠܟ ܒܫܡܟ ܫܡܥܝܢ ܘܠܒ ܡܬܬܕܡܪܝܢ ܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܟ.

32 Plutarch, *De Curiositate*, 2 (= 516C): καὶ Ἀρίστιππος Ὀλυμπίασιν Ἰσχομάχῳ συμβαλὼν ἠρώτα τί Σωκράτης διαλεγόμενος οὕτω τοὺς νέους διατίθησι, καὶ μίκρ' ἄττα τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ σπέρματα καὶ δείγματα λαβὼν οὕτως ἐμπαθῶς ἔσχεν, ὥστε τῷ σώματι συμπεσεῖν καὶ γενέσθαι παντάπασιν ὠχρὸς καὶ ἰσχνός· ἄχρις οὗ πλεύσας Ἀθήναζε διψῶν καὶ διακεκαυμένος ἠρύσατο τῆς πηγῆς καὶ τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ἱστόρησεν, ἧς ἦν τέλος ἐπιγνῶναι τὰ ἑαυτοῦ κακὰ καὶ ἀπαλλαγῆναι; trans. from Helmbold, 479.

33 *Er.* 167.11–23: ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܐܪܣܛܝܦܘܣ ܗܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܗܘܢ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܣܘ̈ܓܐܐ ܕܣܩܪܛܝܣ ܕܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܒܠܗܘܢ. ܘܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܫܬܡܥ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܒܪ ܚܝܠܗ ܕܐܪܣܛܝܦܘܣ ܐܠܐ ܡܢ ܣܢܝܩܘܬܗ ܕܩܪܝܬܐ. ܕܕܚܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܡܫܡܠܝܘ ܘܒܪ ܚܝܠܗ ܠܟܘܠܗܝܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܐ ܕܬܚܝ̈ܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܒܢ̈ܝ ܕܡܚܐ ܡܫܬ̈ܢܝܐ ܡܩܛܡ ܒܡܥܡܝܟܘܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܗܘ ܡܬܦܪܢܣ ܘܠܐ ܠܐܢܫܐ ܠܡܬܒܥܐ. ܐܠܐ ܠܐܢܫܐ ܕܡܢܗܘܢ ܫܒ̈ܝܐ. ܐܝܟܢ ܗܘܐ ܐܪܥܐ ܡܟܝܢ ܗܘܐ ܘܐܟܠܐ ܘܫܬܝܐ ܡܚܡܝܢ ܗܘܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܡܫܬܡܠܐ ܠܗ ܠܐܪܣܛܝܦܘܣ ܘܠܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܗܘܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܬܥܝܢ ܗܘܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܓܠܝܐ ܗܘܐ ܘܚܫܝܐ ܠܓܠܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܬܒ ܡܛܘܠ ܗܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܚܝܫܘܬܐ ܐܝܟܢ ܕܥܒܕܝܢ. ܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܕܡܬܢܝܢ ܗܘܐ ܫܒܐ ܠܐܪܥܐ. ܐܡܪܐ ܕܠܒܐ ܘܦܠܓܐ ܡܢ ܐܬܪ ܒܪܬܐ ܩܠܝܐ ܘܡܠܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܗܘܘ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܒܥܠܝܢܘܬܗ. ܗܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܥܠܕܒܒܘܬܗ ܠܡܠܟ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܢܥܒܕ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܒ ܡܕܡ ܗܘܐ.

34 The same remark is found in Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, 3.36; Demetrius, *De Elocutione*, 288.

35 For example, Cicero, *Ad Familiares*, 9.26.2, Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, 2.65, and Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 14.18; Giannantoni, *Socraticorum Reliquiae*, 185–285.

36 The only exception is the remark about the lack of Socratic wisdom in *Erostrophus* mentioned in the passage above.

37 For the origins of apparently very different traditions on Aristippus, see McKirahan 'The Socratic Origins', 377–82.

38 Plutarch, *Moralia* (4F), 80C, 439E, 462D, 469C, 516C, 750D, and fr. 42.5 and 179.93, ed. Sandbach; Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 1.9, ed. Trapp; Galen, *De Indolentia*, 39–43, ed. Boudon-Millot, Jouanna, and Pietrobelli with Kaufman, 'Galen', 277; Malherbe, *Socratic Epistles*, 27–9.

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