

## MISZELLEN

SOCRATES THE SEPTUAGENARIAN:  
PL. APOL. SOCR. 17D1–2 IN AN ARABIC  
VERSION

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At Apol. Socr. 17d1–2, where Plato’s Socrates mentions his age, the primary manuscript witnesses of the direct tradition transmit a pair of readings. One reading, also attested in the only ancient witness of the indirect tradition (Syrianus) and supported by literary evidence, makes Socrates seventy years old (ἔτη ... ἐβδομήκοντα);<sup>1</sup> the other, by the addition of πλείω ‘more,’ makes him over seventy (ἔτη ... πλείω ἐβδομήκοντα).<sup>2</sup> An unstudied fragment of the *Apology*, probably drawn from an Arabic version or adaptation made in the early tenth century at latest, lends further support to the former reading.

After relating Socrates’ biography in his *Choice Accounts about the Generations of Physicians* (*‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī tabaqāt al-atibbā’*), the thirteenth-century medical historian ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a (henceforth ‘IAU’) draws attention to three divergent accounts of Socrates’ age at death. The eleventh-century chronicler al-Mubaššir ibn Fātik reports that Socrates ‘died by poison(ing) when he was a few years over one hundred’ (*māta bi-l-sammi wa-lahū mi’ atu sanatin wa-biḍ’ u sinīna*). The ninth-century translator Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn, on the other hand, relates that Socrates lived to about the same age as Plato (*‘āša Suqrāt qarīban mimmā ‘āša Aflātun*), namely eighty years. Finally IAU, who elsewhere in his *Choice Accounts* paraphrases

1) For Syrianus, see Schol. Hermog. De statibus IV 318.32 (Walz). For literary evidence within the Platonic corpus, see Pl. Crit. 52e, and for external literary evidence, see Diog. Laert. II 44 = Demetr. Phal. Fr. 153 (Wehrli) and FrGrHist 244 F 34.

2) For defenses of the latter reading as intended for rhetorical effect (“ad vim oratoriam ... requiri”) or as too clever to be an interpolation (“doctius additamentum ... quam quod ad interpolatorem referamus”), see the judgments of Stallbaum and Hermann, as reported by Wohlrab 1877 ad loc. For the manuscript evidence, I rely on Duke et al. 1995, who sort the non-papyri witnesses into three families: β (two MSS), T (one MS), and δ (seven primary witnesses: four MSS, the medieval Armenian version, and early correcting hands in one MS each of family β and family T). β and δ agree in reading ἔτη ... ἐβδομήκοντα against T, which reads ἔτη ... πλείω ἐβδομήκοντα. Duke et al., however, emphasize that in this tradition the agreement of two families against the third is never decisive (praefatio, xvi–xvii).

Pl. R. 407d–408b on Asclepius and his sons and relates a long narrative of the death of Socrates based partly on the *Phaedo* and *Crito*,<sup>3</sup> appeals to evidence from a work entitled *Ihtigāḡ Suqrāt ‘alā ahl Aṭīniya* (*Socrates’ Defense Against the Athenians*). A work of the same title was apparently known several centuries earlier to al-Fārābī (870–950 C. E.)<sup>4</sup> and – probably through al-Fārābī – to the Andalusians Averroes and Judah Halevi.<sup>5</sup> IAU’s quotation, which would seem to be taken directly from a version or adaptation of the *Apology*,<sup>6</sup> has escaped notice in much of the secondary literature on the Arabic Plato.<sup>7</sup> The passage runs as follows:

3) For the *Republic* passage, probably drawn from Galen’s *Synopsis* in the version of the Hunayn circle, see Müller 1882, 16.6–9; for the death of Socrates narrative, see *ibid.* 45.2–47.8 (cf. Alon 1995, 30–35).

4) Gutas 1988, 44 n. 35 notes that this title appears both in the list of Plato’s works found in *Choice Accounts* and in Fārābī’s *Philosophy of Plato* and argues that it ‘represents a tradition deriving immediately from the Greek (ἀπολογία Σωκράτους πρὸς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους) without the filter of intermediate paraphrases,’ i. e. as opposed to a likely *Apology* adaptation attributed to the philosopher al-Kindī under the title ‘What Transpired between Socrates and the Harrānians’ (on Fārābī’s possible source(s) for the *Philosophy of Plato*, see most recently Connelly 2016, with bibliography). In fact, Fārābī in his *On Demonstration* (*Kitāb al-Burhān*) quotes Apol. Socr. 20d–e2, words he attributes to Socrates ‘during his defense against the leading men of the city of Athens’ (*‘inda ihtigāḡibī ‘alā ru’ asā’ ahl madīnat Aṭīniya*): see Dānišpužah 1987, 332.12–16. Fārābī, however, also mentions a separate *Apology of Socrates* (*I’ tidār Suqrāt*), which suggests that he came across the title *I’ tidār* in a pinax but was familiar with another work circulating under the title *Ihtigāḡ*. Although the ancient title of the work is ἀπολογία Σωκράτους πρὸς τοὺς δικαστάς (cf. Pl. Phd. 63b), Socrates in fact addresses the jury members as ‘men of Athens’ (ὁ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι) rather than with the conventional formula ‘men of the jury’ (ὁ ἄνδρες δικασταί): on the noteworthy form of address, see Slings / de Strycker 1994 ad loc., with references. Perhaps it was Socrates’ principled breach of etiquette in his defense speech that gave rise to the slightly variant title preserved in the Arabic tradition.

5) See Averroes’ quotation of the same passage, Apol. Socr. 20d–e2, which he attributes to ‘Socrates defending himself in Athens’ (*Suqrāt muhtaḡḡan fī Aṭīniya*): Badawī 1954, 224.16–17 = Blumberg 1972, 73.9–74.1, with endnote. See also Judah Halevi’s double quotation of the passage in the famous *Kuzari*: Baneth 1977, 164.16–17 and 212.2–4. For other material ultimately deriving from Apol. Socr. 20d–23d, see the two adaptations of the story of Socrates and the Delphic oracle related by ibn Hindū, translated and briefly discussed in Rosenthal 1970, 312–313 = Gutas 2015, 980–981.

6) The phrase ‘I have found in the work ...’ indicates that IAU himself had access to a version or adaptation of the *Apology*. Additionally, as Ignacio Sánchez (University of Warwick) informs me (personal communication of 2/5/2019), IAU consistently uses the formula *aqūlu* ‘I say, I assert’ to present his own opinion, glossing a source or emphasizing (and in some cases resolving) an inconsistency between various sources.

7) The passage is not mentioned, for instance, in Rosenthal 1940/1941, De Smet 2011, Arnzen 2009, or Gutas 2012; Klein-Franke 1973, 128 mentions the pas-

أقول ووجدت في كتاب أفلاطن المسمى احتجاج سقراط على أهل أثينية وهو يحكي قول سقراط بهذا اللفظ  
 قال ما تعنيت [ما تعنيت Müller : إني ما تعنيت var. إني ما نصبت Nağğār : ما تمنيت Riḏā Alon  
 مجلس الحكم قط قبل هذه المرة على أنني قد بلغت من السن سبعين سنة  
 وهذا الاحتجاج الذي كان بينه وبين أهل أثينية إنما كان قبل موته بمدة يسيرة

*aqūlu: wa-wağadtu fī kitābi Aflātuna l-musammā ḥtiğāğa Suqrāta ‘alā  
 ahli Aṭīniyata wa-huwa yahkī qaṣla Suqrāta bi-hādā l-lafzi*

*qāla: mā ta’annaytu [mā ta’annaytu Müller : innī mā ta’annaytu  
 Nağğār, var. innī mā naṣabtu : mā tamannaytu Riḏā Alon] mağlisa  
 l-ḥukmi qaṭtu qabla hādībi l-marrati ‘alā annī qad balağtu mina l-sinni  
 sab’ina sanatan*

*wa-hādā l-iḥtiğāğu llaḏī kāna baynahū wa-bayna ahli Aṭīniyata innamā  
 kāna qabla maṣṭiḥi bi-muddatin yasīratin* (ed. Müller 1884 47.13–16 =  
 ed. Riḏā 1965 76.1–3 = ed. Alon 1995 10.ult.–11.3 (§ 24) = ed. Nağğār  
 1996 254.7–11)

I say: I have found [sc. the following] in the work of Plato’s called *Socrates’ Defense Against the Athenians*, which recounts what Socrates said in these words:

[Socrates] said: ‘I have never bothered with [*bothered with* Müller, Nağğār, var. *set up* : *hoped for* Riḏā Alon]<sup>8</sup> the court before this time (*marra*), despite having reached seventy years of age.’

This defense, which took place between him and the Athenians, occurred just a short while before his death.

In IAU’s quotation, ‘despite having reached seventy years of age’ (*‘alā annī qad balağtu mina l-sinni sab’ina sanatan*) renders the variant ἔτη γεγονώς ἑβδομήκοντα, with the participle interpreted concessively.<sup>9</sup> The Greek exemplar of this Arabic version or adaptation must have agreed with the hyparchetypes of two of the three MSS families (β and δ) and the only other witness of the indirect tradition (Syrianus) against the third family (T). The Arabic thus furnishes one more attestation, from a

sage and suggests that it derives from an epitome. Cf. De Simone 1991, 1564 with n. 18 and Jolivet 1995, 80.

8) The text here may be corrupt: none of the available readings seems to fit the context (νῦν ἐν τῷ πρῶτον ἐπὶ δικαστήριον ἀναβέβηκα), which suggests a verb meaning ‘to appear in, to attend, to visit.’ Ignacio Sánchez (University of Warwick) informs me (personal communication of 2/5/2019) that all the MSS he has consulted in preparing a new edition of IAU read *ta’annaytu*.

9) For a close lexical parallel, see Gutas & Endress 2015 s.v. *balağa* § 1.12, in which οὐδέπω πενταετῆ γεγονότα in a passage from Artemidorus’ *Oneirocritica* is rendered as *qabla an yabluğa ḥamsa sinīna* ‘before he reaches five years (sc. of age).’

source antedating most or perhaps even all of the extant Greek MSS,<sup>10</sup> of a reading widely accepted by modern editors.<sup>11</sup>

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10) If, as I suspect, this Arabic version or adaptation can be identified with the work known to al-Fārābī (see n. 4 above), it must have been made in the early tenth century at latest (since the Graeco-Arabic translation movement spanned the eighth to tenth centuries, the translation may well have been made a century or more earlier). The oldest Greek MS that transmits this passage is the Bodleianus Clarkeanus 39 (‘B’), copied in 895.

11) Adam 1887 (Appendix II ad loc.), Burnet 1910, Croiset 1920, and Duke et al. 1995 all endorse ἐπὶ γεροντῶς ἐβδόμηkovτα.

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