

The Syriac *De virtute*:
Themistius, possibly Julian, and a discourse on Cynicism (or cynicism?)

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The discourse *De Virtute*, which is lost in Greek but survives in a Syriac translation (c. fifth-century), has only marginally figured in recent scholarship on Themistius. The first part of the paper surveys the contents of the discourse, which, perhaps unexpectedly, provides an account of Cynic philosophy and praises the moral principles that underpin it. This strikes as an unusual subject among the works by Themistius. The second part of the paper proposes a tentative historical setting by suggesting a dialogue between the *De Virtute* and Julian's *Or. 7 To the Cynic Heracleius* and *Or. 6 To the Uneducated Cynics*, and puts forward the hypothesis that the *De Virtute* was pronounced in Constantinople in the early months of 362.