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ON THE MIRROR OF TYRANTS: XENOPHON'S *HIERO* AND ITS CONTEXT(S)*

Abstract: This article argues that in the *Hiero*, Xenophon skilfully combines elements of wisdom literature, epinician poetry, the Mirror of Tyrants and *logoi Sōkratikoī*. In doing so, he pursues two objectives. One is to link his reflections on leadership to respected and influential traditions in order to give his views additional weight and render them interesting for a wider audience. The second objective is to respond to Plato's challenge to the traditional way of doing politics and, more specifically, the view that it is irremediable. For these reasons, this paper attempts to reconstruct the influence of wisdom literature (*hypothēkai*, Seven Sages), the Mirror of Tyrants (Isocrates), epinician poetry (Simonides, Pindar) and Plato's dialogues on the *Hiero*.

Keywords: The *Hiero*, Seven Sages, Praise and Didactic Poetry, Mirror of Tyrants, Xenophon, Simonides, Plato, Isocrates, Pindar.

Time and again, Xenophon's *Hiero* has been a source of fascination for modern scholars. Ever since Leo Strauss' influential study *On Tyranny* (1948), this dialogue has been mainly regarded as distinctively idiosyncratic.¹ Its oddity is manifested chiefly in its positive attitude toward tyranny.² In the opening part, the poet and wise man Simonides glorifies the benefits of tyrannical power, only to be corrected by Hiero, the tyrant. In the second part, Simonides rejects Hiero's pessimism and demonstrates how to overcome the disadvantages of autocratic rule. It is, however, my belief that viewing this

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For the notion Mirror of Tyrants and its relation to the Mirror of Princes, see Jordović 2019: 11–14, 160–164.

¹ Strauss 2000: 29–30; see also Buzzetti 2015: 234–235. Strauss' influence is mirrored in the fact that in scholarly circles there is a noticeable tendency to link the *Hiero* with his study; see, e.g., Buzzetti 2015: 227–257; Burns – Frost 2016; Nippel 2017: 254 with n. 53. Nino Luraghi (2013: 140) notices that the very different interpretations of the *Education of Cyrus* can be credited to its puzzling nature.

² See, e.g., Levy 2018: 29–30.

idiosyncrasy as key to understanding the *Hiero* has reached its limits. Despite the manifold and often intricate solutions it provides, the motives that inspired Xenophon to write *Hiero* are still much in dispute.³

Three features of Xenophon's writings are important for an understanding of *Hiero*: diversity of genre, consistency of political and ethical opinion, and the relatively short time it took him to write it. Several works on the same or a related topic by a single author may be explained by slight, or not so slight, changes of opinion over time. Writing works that differ from one another may be a consequence of examining widely varying topics. The first explanation will not do for Xenophon because of the consistency of his views. The second might serve for works such as the *Apology of Socrates*, *Hellenica*, *Agesilaus*, etc. However, neither interpretation explains the origins of *Cyropaedia* or *Hiero*. It is not possible to pin them to an exact date (the late 360s or early 350s B.C.E.), but they were certainly not written more than a few years apart.⁴ Both revolve around an autocratic ruler and the issue of retaining power, or rather, how to achieve good rule. Cyrus, indeed, serves as a paradigm of a good, successful, and happy monarch, and Hiero as one of an unhappy tyrant. However, we must not forget that even before describing Cyrus's rise, Xenophon makes it clear that the rule of the founder of the Persian Empire serves as a counterexample of failed exercise of authority in a democracy, oligarchy, monarchy and tyranny:⁵

ἐννοία ποθ' ἡμῖν ἐγένετο ὅσαι δημοκρατίαι κατελύθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλως πῶς βουλομένων πολιτεύεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν δημοκρατία, ὅσαι τ' αὐτὴ μοναρχίαι, ὅσαι τε ὀλιγαρχίαι ἀνήρηνται ἤδη ὑπὸ δῆμων, καὶ ὅσοι τυραννεῖν ἐπιχειρήσαντες οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν καὶ ταχὺ πάμπαν κατελύθησαν, οἱ δὲ κἄν ὀποσονοῦν χρόνον ἄρχοντες διαγέωνται, θαναμάζονται ὡς σοφοὶ τε καὶ εὐτυχεῖς ἄνδρες γεγενημένοι.

The thought once occurred to us how many democracies have been overthrown by people who preferred to live under any form of government other than a democratic one, and again, how many monarchies and how many oligarchies in times past have been abolished by the people. We reflected, moreover, how many of those individuals who have aspired to absolute power have either been deposed once and for all and that right quickly; or if they have continued in power, no matter for how short a time, they are objects of wonder as having proved to be wise and happy men (*sophoi te kai eutycheis andres*).

³ See, for example, Sordi 2004: 71–78, esp. 73–74 (Desire to instruct the contemporary rulers of Syracuse); Sevieri 2004: 277–287 (A recourse to a complex of thoughts current in epinician poetry); Gray 2007 (A blueprint for philosophers interested in how to reform a tyrant and a mirror for autocratic rulers); Schorn 2008: 177–203 (Inconsistencies in argumentation and allusions to Xenophon's Socratic works indicate that the reader interested in this topic should consult the *Memorabilia* and *Oeconomicus*); *Id.* 2010: 38–61 (Simonides' advice in Part 2 is based on Philistus' idealisation of Dionysios I); Leppin 2010: 77–89 (Part of the political discourse which aims at a depersonalisation of politics in favour of techniques of governance); Gaile-Irbe 2013: 93–105 (A response to Plato's depiction of tyranny in Book 8–9 of the *Republic*); Takakjy 2017: 49–73 (A negative critique of the epinician genre and the presumption that praise poetry can mask tyranny and other ethical failings); Zuolo 2018: 564–576 (Its purpose is to provide guidance for potential or actual tyrants. For this reason Socrates is not included in the dialogue, despite its partially Socratic structure); Parks 2018: 385–410 (Instructs on how to turn a faulty leadership system around on the basis of self-interest and by means of pragmatic reform); Levy 2018: 29–50 (By presenting Hiero's dissatisfaction with tyranny and Simonides' advice, Xenophon indicates the essentially defective character of the *bios tyrannikos*).

⁴ See Aalders 1953: 208–215; Breitenbach 1967: 1742, 1746.

⁵ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.1.1 (trans. W. Miller, with minor changes); see also Gray 1986: 117.

It follows that any divergence in the content matter of *Hiero* could fit without much difficulty within the frame of *Cyropaedia*, and even more so since, in addition to the new Assyrian King embodying the prototype of the worst type of tyrant, it also features several “half-bad” or “half-good” autocrats such as Astyages, Cyaxares, Croesus and the King of Armenia.⁶ Furthermore, in the episode about the “half-bad” Armenian king, a wise man (*sophistēs*) is mentioned and his depiction coincides with the image of Socrates.⁷ All this leads to the assumption that we should look for Xenophon’s impetus for writing the *Hiero* not so much in the content of the work but in the form.

On these grounds, this study deliberately opts for a different approach. It argues that Xenophon never composed the *Hiero* to be puzzling. On the contrary, his intention was to compose a sophisticated work with a clear message.⁸ It is our lack of understanding of this dialogue’s generic context that creates an impression of oddness. Francis Cairns’ observation summarizes perfectly the logic adopted by this study:⁹

The logical incompleteness and apparent internal inconsistencies of many ancient writings are consequence of their non-individual character, that is, their membership of genres in the sense defined. These writings assume in the reader a knowledge of the circumstances and content of the particular genre to which they belong, and they exploit this knowledge to allow logical connexions and distinctions to remain implicit or be omitted altogether. In ages and civilizations where, as is the case today, writer and audience do not share a common body of knowledge and expectation, such features of literary works may well be faults of composition. But in situations where, as in classical antiquity, writer and audience do have this common background, they can be part of a greater sophistication in the conveying of information.

If a work subtly combines elements of several genres, it is reasonable to assume that the perception of inconsistency can evolve into an impression that one is dealing with an extremely perplexing or even odd text. For these reasons, this paper will focus on Xenophon’s subtle playing with different genres and his dialogue with other classical authors, rather than on a dialectical engagement with other modern interpreters of the *Hiero*. It will also refrain from a thorough examination of Xenophon’s reflections on the nature of leadership, since it assumes that all of his writings in this respect represent one and the same view.¹⁰

This study is divided into four sections. The basic premise of the first part (*Hiero and the Wisdom Literature*) is that Xenophon modelled *Hiero* after motifs typical for

⁶ Assyrian King (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.16–17; 4.6.2–6; 5.2.27–28, 3.6–8, 4.30–31; 6.1.45; 7.5.29–30); Astyages (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.3.2, 4–5, 10, 16, 18); Cyaxares (Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.5–6; 4.1.13–21, 5.8–12, 27–34; 5.5.2, 6–36, 39, 44; 6.1.1); Croesus (Xen. *Cyr.* 4.1.8, 2.29; 6.2.19, 7.2.5, 9–29; 8.2.15–19); King of Armenia (Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.12, 22; 3.1.1–2, 9–40); cf. Eder 1995: 166–167.

⁷ Xen. *Cyr.* 3.1.38–40; see Gera 1993: 27, 86–88, 91–93.

⁸ *Contra* Strauss 2000: 26,

⁹ See Cairns 1972: 6–7; see also Ford 2019: 57–73. Vivienne Gray (1998: 159–160) quotes the same lines with regard to the *Memorabilia*. A complicating factor is the phenomenon called generification. Andrew Ford (2019: 57–81) draws attention to the fact that genres are not timeless, pristine or pure, as the production of a genre is an ongoing process. Authors learned early to revise and exploit literary tradition in order to present their work as new and old at the same time. As a result of this, genres gradually evolve. Glenn Most (1994: 131–134, 148–150) gives a very interesting account of the principles and problems that guide the recontextualization of ancient texts.

¹⁰ See, for example, Schorn 2008: 179; 188–193, 195, 199–200.

wisdom literature in order to give additional weight to his views and render them interesting for a wider audience. It will show that the tradition of the Seven Sages was popular and fictitious, its ethic was traditional and leaned toward the practical, the contrast *sophos – tyrannos* played an important role, and that there is a link to poetry as the most popular tradition of pre-philosophical wisdom. Because of this, in the Classical age individuals and groups who were engaged in cultivating knowledge tended to associate their teachings with the Seven Sages in order to bolster their authority with their audience (e.g., Simonides). Plato, Isocrates and the Peripatetics are illustrations of this tendency being augmented by an additional aspect: invoking the Seven Sages as part of the debate over what type of knowledge and educational scheme might be subsumed under the term philosophy.

This would suggest that *Hiero* shares many commonalities with wisdom literature: it is in essence an “outsized” anecdote about an encounter between a wise man and a tyrant; no serious effort is made to give the discussion at least a pseudo-credible historical background; the sage is a poet; its practice-oriented ethic is reflected in the fact that advice to the tyrant focuses on mechanisms of rule rather than on the ruler’s ethical improvement;¹¹ the strong emphasis on reciprocity shows that, in key areas, its ethic is in accordance with Greek popular morality. Finally, *Hiero* was written with an intense dispute between rival political thinkers in mind, which will be discussed later in greater detail.

The second section (*Simonides and Plato*) examines why Xenophon chose Simonides. It pursues three lines of argument and elucidates the influence of the *logoi Sōkratikoī*. One of these is that, in the fourth century B.C.E, there was a strong anecdotal tradition involving Simonides that was appealing to Xenophon for several reasons: it focuses on Simonides’ personality rather than his work, placing him between the Seven Sages and the Socratics; the *apophthegmata* ascribed to Simonides exhibit commonalities with proverbs attributed to most renowned poets and to Socratics. Due to these features it made sense for Xenophon to choose Simonides as an interlocutor in the *Hiero*, because his figure could serve as bridge between the old (poetry, Seven Sages) and new traditions of wisdom (sophistry, philosophy). The second line of argument posits that the same tradition incited Plato to strongly criticise Simonides, which in turn provoked Xenophon to respond. In the *Protagoras* and the *Republic*, several of Socrates’ interlocutors invoke Simonides as an intellectual authority in order to substantiate their arguments. This forces Socrates not only to refute their standpoints, but also to contradict the view that Simonides is wise and claim that he was not truly free. In this context it is significant that Plato is in complete opposition to Xenophon regarding several important notions and concepts (the hard path of virtue and easy path of vice; re-education of the tyrannical man; justice is to harm one’s enemies and help one’s friends; the response to the *doxa-alētheia* challenge). And finally, Xenophon chose Simonides because parallels were drawn even in the Platonic tradition between Plato’s links to the Dionysii of Syracuse, Simonides and Hiero, as well as to Solon, Croesus and Cyrus.

The third section (*The Mirror of Tyrants, Encomium and Epinicion*) addresses why Xenophon opted for Hiero as the other interlocutor and examines the impact of the Mirror of Tyrants and praise poetry. An analysis of Isocrates’ Mirror of Tyrants reveals several

¹¹ Cf. Leppin 2010.

important features of this genre: the contrast *bios tyrannikos* – *bios idiōtikos* plays a major role and its origins can be traced back to Plato's response to the democratic controversy *polypragmosynē* – *apragmosynē*; the tyrannical life is eulogised, yet this is not to be confused with its advocacy, as its purpose is to repudiate Plato's view that the traditional way of conducting politics is incorrigible; there is a link between the encomium and the moral precepts of the poets, which in turn are related to wisdom literature; advice is to be dispensed in an interesting manner; the ruler being praised should overcome the dichotomy *public* – *private*; this type of text is philosophical in nature; the advice is to be directed at a contemporary (not mythical) ruler; the historical context serves as a backcloth, and because of this, its visibility can vary noticeably; and finally, Dionysios I and Cyrus belong to the most popular figures of this genre.

Almost all of these elements can be detected in the *Hiero* and may be interpreted as a sign of Isocrates' influence. Nonetheless, Xenophon did not just depend upon Isocrates, but also went back to the epinician poets who praised Hiero. They contributed greatly to his rule remaining in the memory of subsequent generations in a considerably more positive light than that of the Dionysii. Given the fragmentary state of Simonides' work, the impact of epinician poetry on Xenophon (and Isocrates) can be determined above all from Pindar's victory odes. An examination of Pindar's Mirror of Tyrants-like passages illustrates how he anticipated some of the key elements of this genre: the character of the ruler takes precedence over the type of constitution; the positive image of the tyrant reveals itself in benevolence towards citizens; the inconsistency of the ruler's happiness and the envy of his subjects are important topics; moral conduct is seen as prerequisite for successful rule; and the juxtaposition of positive and negative patterns of behaviour is a key technique by which ruler is praised.

The fourth and last section (*The Principal Message of the Hiero*) argues that the main aim of *Hiero* is to rebut Plato's radical break with the traditional way of doing politics. A comparison of relevant passages from the *Hiero*, the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* reveals significant concurrences between Plato and Xenophon: praise of the *bios tyrannikos* reflects general opinion; the term *zēloûn* is used to denote a positive attitude towards tyranny; the illusory nature of the notion of a happy tyrant is revealed through Socratic argument; every aspect of the tyrant's life is determined by his position; the tyrant is absolutely unfree as he is least likely to do what he really wants; etc. Nevertheless, there is one crucial difference, and it makes clear that the function of these parallels is to underline Xenophon's fundamental disagreement with Plato. The principal message of the *Hiero* is that the tyrant can change and achieve a happy life by following the *sophos*' instructions. In contrast, Plato argues in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* that the traditional *bios politikos* ultimately leads to the *bios tyrannikos*, and the tyrannical man is deaf to all words of truth. Consequently, traditional politics must be rejected and replaced with philosophy. By saying that the tyrant can be transformed, Xenophon claims that even the worst aberrations of traditional politics can be corrected, thus dismissing Plato's stance that (traditional) politics and philosophy are diametrically opposed.

1. The *Hiero* and Wisdom Literature

The *Memorabilia* are modelled on the tradition of *chreiai* and *apophthegmata*—the pithy, sage proverbs and the actions of wise men. This was a favoured and greatly venerated tradition in the late fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.¹² In antiquity, over twenty people were counted among the Seven Sages.¹³ All *hoi hepta sophoi* were famous people who lived in the seventh and sixth centuries. The tradition, however, did not emerge until the late sixth and early fifth centuries.¹⁴

Xenophon's affinity for the wisdom literature genre is also evident in the *Hiero*. The reader is immediately aware that this is not a dialogue between just any two people, but between a tyrant and a poet, and the latter is explicitly referred to as a wise man.¹⁵

Σιμωνίδης ὁ ποιητὴς ἀφίκετό ποτε πρὸς Ἱέρωνα τὸν τύραννον. σχολῆς δὲ γενομένης ἀμφοῖν εἶπεν ὁ Σιμωνίδης ἄρ' ἂν μοι ἐθελήσῃς, ὦ Ἱέρων, διηγήσασθαι ἅ εἰκὸς εἰδέναί σε βέλτιον ἐμοῦ; καὶ ποῖα ταῦτ' ἐστίν, ἔφη ὁ Ἱέρων, ὅποια δὴ ἐγὼ βέλτιον ἂν εἰδείην σοῦ οὕτως ὄντος σοφοῦ ἀνδρός; οἶδά σε, ἔφη, ἐγὼ καὶ ἰδιώτην γεγενημένον καὶ νῦν τύραννον ὄντα· εἰκὸς οὖν ἀμφοτέρων πεπειραμένον καὶ εἰδέναί σε μᾶλλον ἐμοῦ, πῆ διαφέρει ὁ τυραννικὸς τε καὶ ὁ ἰδιωτικὸς βίος εἰς εὐφροσύνας τε καὶ λύπας ἀνθρώποις.

Simonides, the poet (*poiētēs*), once paid a visit to Hiero, the despot (*tyrannos*). When both found time to spare, Simonides said: “Hiero, will you please explain something to me that you probably know better than I?” “And pray what is it,” said Hiero, “that I can know better than one so wise (*sophos*) as yourself?” “I know you were born a private citizen (*idiōtēs*,” he answered, “and are now a despot (*tyrannos*). Therefore, as you have experienced both fortunes, you probably know better than I how the lives (*bios*) of the despot (*tyrannikos*) and the citizen (*idiōtikos*) differ as regards the joys and sorrows that fall to man's lot.”

In addition to the contrast sage – tyrant, there are two more aspects typical of wisdom literature. From the opening sentence we learn only that Simonides “once upon a time” came to Hiero, but everything else is left in the dark.¹⁶ This makes it clear that the conversation's historical context is merely a backdrop. The other aspect is the information that the sage visited the ruler. Herodotus illustrates that both aspects were characteristic of anecdotes about encounters between the sage and the tyrant.¹⁷

In the first half of the fourth century, several important thinkers thematised the sayings of the Seven Sages, and associated them directly or indirectly with their own teachings. The first reliably known to have done so is Plato. The *Protagoras* is not only the oldest surviving source in which the Seven Sages form a homogeneous *collegium*; in addition it declares that Solon is the wisest among them. Plato is also the first to show that,

¹² See Gray 1998: 105–122, 159–177, 191–192.

¹³ Diog. Laert. 1.40–41; see White 2001: 204; Leão 2010: 409. For the notion Seven Sages (*hoi hepta sophoi / sophoi / sophistai / hoi hepta / hepta philosophoi*; Diog. Laert. 1.22; 9.71) see Barkowski 1923: 2242–2243; Martin 1998: 109; Engels 2010: 7, 9.

¹⁴ See Martin 1998: 112–113; Bollansée 1999: 65–75; *contra* Fehling 1985: 12–19.

¹⁵ Xen. *Hier.* 1.1–2 (trans. E. C. Marchant); see Gray 2007: 31–32. Federico Zuolo (2018: 568) observes: “In 2.5 it is said that Simonides holds *gnomē*, a traditional form of wisdom”.

¹⁶ See Strauss 2000: 36.

¹⁷ Hdt. 1.27.2, 29.1.

in the Classical period, the Seven Sages served as a means of identification and legitimacy for various groups devoted to the cultivation of knowledge (*Wissenspflege*). Plato's Socrates introduces his genealogy of *philosophia* as a countermodel to Protagoras' history of sophistry. While the sophist lists renowned poets (including Simonides) as predecessors of the *sophistikē technē* and as crypto-sophists, Socrates explains that philosophy has its most ancient roots in Crete and Lacedaemon, and counts the Seven Sages among the crypto-philosophers.¹⁸ It is not surprising then, that numerous collections of sayings by the Seven Sages appeared in the fourth century. More importantly, as philosophy began to delimit from sophistry, rhetoric, poetry, traditional religion and the specialized sciences, there was debate concerning which types of knowledge could be subsumed under the term philosophy and which could not.¹⁹ It appears the debate prompted additional interest in the wisdom of the Seven Sages, which would explain the different roles assigned to them by tradition. Diogenes Laertius says that they were designated as philosophers, poets, men of practical wisdom, and legislators.²⁰ In the *Antidosis*, Isocrates contests the application of the term philosophy to the abstract study of reality. At the same time, he associates his conception of philosophy with the Seven Sages and in particular with Solon.²¹ The Peripatetics show that, even within one philosophical school, there were diverging opinions, which gave rise to scholarly quandaries over the nature of these divergences. Some believe that Aristotle and Theophrastus saw the Seven Sages as representing *bios theōrētikos*, but that Dicaearchus believed them to represent *bios praktikos*.²² Others, again, assume that Aristotle saw the oldest form of philosophy in their sayings,²³ and that Dicaerchus believed them to be wise but not philosophers as the term was generally understood from Plato onwards.²⁴

Another important feature of the tradition of the Seven Sages, as noted by Richard Martin and Leslie Kurke, is its connection to the most popular tradition of pre-philosophical (and thus pre-Platonic) wisdom: poetry.²⁵ A number of ancient sources took pains to portray the Seven Sages as writers of poems.²⁶ It is particularly remarkable that not only is Solon depicted as a composer of didactic poems (*hypothēkai*), which is not really surprising, but so, too, is Periander, who, despite having a reputation of being a ruthless tyrant, was counted among the Seven Sages.²⁷ The ancient world, as Monica Gale remarks, "at most periods

¹⁸ Pl. *Prt.* 316d–317c, 342–343b; *Chrm.* 164d–165a; *Hp. mai.* 281c–d; *Ti.* 20d–e; see Wehrli 1973: 195; Rösler 1991: 361; Martin 1998: 112–113, 120–121, 125 n. 16; Manuwald 1999: 140–144, 324–326, 330–331, 335–337; Althoff – Zeller 2006: 8; Asper 2006: 90–91, 95, 98–101; Engels 2010: 13–15; Leão 2010: 409–414. Rudolf Hirzel (1895: 133–135 with n. 2) argues that the sophists considered themselves to be successors of the Seven Sages; cf. also Barkowski 1923: 2262–2263.

¹⁹ See Nehamas 1990: 3–16; Nightingale 2004: 17–19; Nebelin 2016: 310–333, esp. 310–314.

²⁰ Diog. Laert. 1.40; see White 2001: 202; cf. also Martin 1998: 109.

²¹ Isoc. 15.183–188, 235, 261–262, 265–271, 312–313; cf. Nehamas 1990: 4–5; Moore 2019: 213–215.

²² See Jaeger 1928: 1–34, esp. 3–4, 6, 9–10, 25–33; Scholz 1998: 204–211; Fechner – Scholz 2002: 116–118; cf. also Nightingale 2004: 18–26, esp. 21.

²³ See Flashar 2004: 262–263; Althoff 2011: 47–49.

²⁴ See White 2001: 195–236; cf. also Nebelin 2016: 58–59.

²⁵ See Martin 1998: 113–115; Gray 2007: 33; Kurke 2011: 101–108, esp. 105–108; Nebelin 2016: 49–50, 75–77.

²⁶ Diog. Laert. 1.29, 35, 40, 61, 68, 89–90, 97, 101; esp. 40. For Diogenes Laertius as a source see Martin 1998: 109; Nebelin 2016: 55.

²⁷ Diog. Laert. 1.61, 97; see also Solon fr. 4.30 W; cf. Wehrli 1973: 200–201; Martin 1998: 111, 115; Kässer 2005: 96.

tended to regard *all* poetry as educational.²⁸ As a result, ancient literary criticism never devised a category labelled didactic poetry,²⁹ and it was not at all unusual for poets to be portrayed as bearers of wisdom.³⁰ Therefore, it is no coincidence that Plato associates his most severe criticism of Simonides with the tradition of the Seven Sages (see below). Furthermore, in this same context, Plato rejects Hesiod's notion of two paths (see below). This is significant insofar as Hesiod was one of the first and foremost representatives of the *hypothēkai* genre.³¹

Tradition does not depict the Seven Sages as teachers of abstract principles. Their wisdom is practical, it resolves difficult questions or situations, and they demonstrate a manifest concern for others. As a rule, their sayings are pithy, without justification, timeless, unrelated to a singular situation, intrinsically imperative and not directed at anyone in particular; several wise men are frequently cited as the authors of one and the same adage. These qualities point to the conclusion that they reflect Greek popular wisdom and general norms of behaviour.³² It follows that these maxims were only later associated with certain individuals and it is from this that the tradition of the Seven Sages emerged. There are various hypotheses on the causes that gave rise to it (a defence mechanism of Greek identity, the strengthening of Panhellenic unity, the expansion of Delphic influence, the need to adjust the concept of the wise and cunning individual to new challenges, a vehicle for transmitting a typology of aristocratic principles, etc.).³³

Because the sayings of the Seven Sages represent a practical ethic based on insight into the general *conditio humana*, it is to be expected that, in a society dominated by the polis, their wisdom would often touch on social and political matters. They condemned self-serving, wilful and violent behaviour, so the original intention for many of them was to curb or quash egotistical grasping after honour and power in domineering individuals, as it endangered the stability of the polis. It was thus not unusual for the best-known of the Seven Sages to be associated with public life and political activity in various ways.³⁴

²⁸ Gale 100–104; see also *Id.* 2005: 101–103; Kässar 2005: 95.

²⁹ See Kässar 2005: 95–96.

³⁰ Pl. *Prt.* 316d–e; Diog. Laert. 1.12–13; see also Solon fr. 13 W (ll. 51–52); Pind. *Ol.* 1.8–9, 116; 9.38, *Pyth.* 1.12; 4.248; 6.49; *Nem.* 7.23; *Isthm.* 7.18; *Pae.* 7b; Thgn. 19, 769–770, 789–790, 995; Xenoph. B 2 DK (ll. 12, 14); see Thayer 1975: 6–10; Mülke 2002: 305; Kurke 2011: 105–106; Itgenshorst 2014: 116–120.

³¹ Hes. fr. 283–285 M–W; Pind. *Pyth.* 6.19–27, 66–69; schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 6.22; Ar. fr. 239 KA; Cratinus fr. 250, 252–253 KA; Pherecrates fr. 155, 162 KA; Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.1; Ath. 8.364a–b; ARV² 329.134; IG VII 4240; see also Ar. *Ran.* 1030–1036; Pl. *Prt.* 316d; 325e–326a; Isoc. 2.3, 42–44; cf. Friedländer 1913: 558–572, esp. 564, 571–572; West 1978: 3–25, esp. 23–25; Martin 1984: 32–33, 38–39; Kurke 1990: 89–95, esp. 90–93 with n. 23; 192; Kässar 2005: 96; Gale 2005: 101–104; Ford 2010: 146–152; Stamatopoulou 2017: 7–8, 114–115, 118–121, 188–192.

³² See Rösler 1991, 357; Asper 2006: 86–87, 89; Engels 2010: 94–97.

³³ See Rösler 1991: 361–364; *Id.* 2003: 111–113; Asper 2006: 93–95; Leão 2010: 404, 411. Winfried Schmitz (2004: 311–330, esp. 319–29) has shown that the influence of didactic literature from the ancient Near East on the Greek wisdom tradition was neither strong nor direct.

³⁴ Sayings: „νόμῳ πείθου – obey the laws“ (S 2; D III. 19; Diog. Laert. 1.70); „ἀρχεσθαι μαθὼν ἀρχεῖν επιστήση – when you learn how to be ruled, you will learn how to rule“ (D II. 10; Diog. Laert. 1.60); see Martin 1998: 115; Asper 2006: 87–88, 91; Engels 2010: 13, 90, 92, 94, 97–98. Solon (mediator and lawgiver), Chilon (high-ranking official) and tyrants (Pittacus, Periander); see also Dicaearch. fr. 30, 31 Wehrli; Diog. Laert. 1.40–1; Cic. *Rep.* 1.12; *De or.* 3.137; see Martin 1998: 115.

Quite early on, encounters between sages and a powerful tyrant became a distinctive aspect of this tradition.³⁵ It is seen first in Herodotus, where four sages, who are always counted among the seven, converse with Croesus.³⁶ According to Herodotus, the Spartan sage Chilon foresaw Peisistratus's rise to power.³⁷ Later sources say that Solon warned of Peisistratus's tyranny and left his native city of his own accord, since none of his fellow citizens believed him.³⁸ After seizing power, Peisistratus generously invited the famous statesman to return to Athens. Solon admitted that, of all the tyrants, Peisistratus was the best, but nevertheless refused to return because he rejected tyranny as a matter of principle.³⁹ Legend has it that Pittacus wanted to renounce power out of the fear of becoming a tyrant.⁴⁰ Plato is said to have stricken Periander from the list of the seven since he believed that no tyrant could be a sage.⁴¹

Notions of the sages not permitting themselves to become blinded by the power and opulence of tyranny, remaining loyal to a government based on law, and showing themselves to be more far-sighted than the tyrants, are in sync with wisdom literature as a genre. However, something else in the depiction of these encounters stands out from the ordinary: These same sages, frequently presented as politically active, when meeting with a tyrant are usually described as having distanced themselves from politics.⁴² This was probably to emphasise the degree to which the sages disapproved of tyrannical rule or, more specifically, the abuse of political power. The best-known story of a meeting with a wise man – the dialogue between Solon and Croesus in Herodotus – goes a step further. In this anecdote not only has the sage turned his back on political life, but he plainly prefers the life of the common people to all the boons of a tyrant's life by describing a few *idiōtai* as the happiest of people while refusing to say the same of the despot Croesus:⁴³

κατεστραμμένων δὲ τούτων καὶ προσεπικτωμένου Κροΐσου Λυδοῖσι, ἀπικνεύονται ἐς Σάρδις ἀκμαζούσας πλούτω ἄλλοι τε οἱ πάντες ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος σοφισταί, οἱ τούτον τὸν χρόνον ἐτύγχανον ἐόντες, ὡς ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἀπικνεόιτο, καὶ δὴ καὶ Σόλων ἀνὴρ Ἀθηναῖος, ὃς Ἀθηναίοισι νόμους κελεύσασι ποιήσας ἀπεδήμησε ἔτεα δέκα κατὰ θεωρίας πρόφασιν ἐκπλώσας, [...] θεησάμενον δὲ μιν τὰ πάντα καὶ σκεννάμενον ὡς οἱ κατὰ καιρὸν ἦν, εἶρετο ὁ Κροῖσος τάδε: 'ξεῖνε Ἀθηναῖε, παρ' ἡμέας γὰρ περὶ σέο λόγος ἀπῖκται πολλὸς καὶ σοφίης εἵνεκεν τῆς σῆς καὶ πλάνης, ὡς φιλοσοφῶν γῆν πολλὴν θεωρίας εἵνεκεν ἐπελήλυθας: νῦν ἂν ἴμερος ἐπειρέσθαι με ἐπηλθέ σε εἰ τινα ἤδη πάντων εἶδες ὀλβιώτατον. [...] Σόλων μὲν δὴ εὐδαιμονίης δευτερεῖα ἔνεμε τούτοισι, Κροῖσος δὲ σπερχθεὶς εἶπε: 'ὦ ξεῖνε Ἀθηναῖε, ἡ δ' ἡμετέρη εὐδαιμονία οὕτω τοι ἀπέρριπται ἐς τὸ μηδὲν ὥστε οὐδὲ ἰδιωτέων ἀνδρῶν ἀξίους ἡμέας ἐποίησας;

³⁵ See Gray 1986: 118–121.

³⁶ Bias, Pittacus (Hdt. 1.27.2–5 *cf.* Diod. 9.25, 9.27.3–4); Solon (Hdt. 1.29–33; *cf.* Diod. 9.1.2–2.4, 9.27.1–2); Thales (Hdt. 1.75.3–6); *cf.* also Diod. Sic. 9.2.1–4, 26.1–27.4. Bias, Pittacus, Solon and Thales are always counted among the Seven Sages (Dicaearch. fr. 32 Wehrli; Diog. Laert. 1.41); see Barkowski 1923: 2244; Rösler 1991: 357–359; Martin 1998: 125 n. 16; Asheri – Lloyd – Corcella 2007: 96; Leão 2010: 405; Engels 2010: 12; Kurke 2010: 104.

³⁷ Hdt. 1.59.1–3; *cf.* also FGrHist 105.1.

³⁸ Diog. Laert. 1.44, 49–50, 93, 113; *cf.* Diod. 9.4.1–4, 9.20.1–4.

³⁹ Diog. Laert. 1.53–54, 66–67.

⁴⁰ Schol. *Hp. mai.* 304e; Zen. 6.38; see also Diog. Laert. 1.75, 77; Diod. 9.11.1, 9.12.2–3; *cf.* Wehrli 1973: 199–201.

⁴¹ Pl. *Rep.* 335e–336a; *Prt.* 343a; Dicaearch. fr. 32 Wehrli; Diog. Laert. 1.106–108; Diod. 9.7; Paus. 10.24.1; *cf.* Manuwald 1999: 336.

⁴² See also Pl. *Hp. mai.* 281b–d; *cp.* Leão 2010: 407–408.

⁴³ Hdt. 1.29–33 (trans. A. D. Godley); see Gray 2007: 32–33; Jordović 2019: 132–134.

and after these were subdued and subject to Croesus in addition to the Lydians, all the sages (*sophistai*) from Hellas who were living at that time, coming in different ways, came to Sardis, which was at the height of its property; and among them came Solon the Athenian, who, after making laws for the Athenians at their request, went abroad for ten years, sailing forth to see the world (*theōria*), [...] After Solon had seen everything and had thought about it, Croesus found the opportunity to say, “My Athenian guest, we have heard a lot about you because of your wisdom (*sophia*) and of your wanderings, how as one who loves learning (*philosophein*) you have travelled much of the world for the sake of seeing it (*theōria*), so now I desire to ask you who is the most fortunate (*olbiōtatos*) man you have seen.” [...] Thus Solon granted second place in happiness to these men. Croesus was vexed and said, “My Athenian guest, do you so much despise our happiness that you do not even make us worth as much as common men (*andrōn idiōteōn*)?”

We may therefore conclude that the *bios tyrannikos* – *bios idiōtikos* dichotomy was already present in wisdom literature. This conclusion is reinforced by Herodotus’ depiction of the meeting between Solon and Croesus becoming a paradigm for the encounter between the sage and the tyrant.⁴⁴

Even this cursory glance at the tradition of the Seven Sages points to several elements that would have prompted Xenophon to write a work referring to wisdom literature:⁴⁵ it was very popular and widely read, it was obviously fictitious, its ethic was a practical one that summed up behavioural norms traditionally considered desirable, and, finally, the wise man and the tyrant were shown as two antipodes. Through the *Hiero*, Xenophon associated his own views and teachings with the wisdom tradition, thus providing them with additional significance.

An inquiring mind is not a sufficient explanation of the diversity of Xenophon’s opus. It is possible that the decision to write *Hiero* was influenced by something else: the desire to acquaint the broadest possible readership with his views. The *Apology*, *Memorabilia* and *Symposium* were intended for those interested in philosophy and Socratic literature; the *Hellenica* was for history lovers; *Agesilaus*, besides satisfying readers of history, would also please those interested in encomia. *Anabasis* is an autobiographical and historical work as well as a military handbook. The *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* can be considered as a *politeia* writing and was certainly read by those who looked to Sparta as a model. The *Cyropaedia* belongs to the Mirror of Tyrants genre with elements of an encomium, a historical novel, and a military handbook. Bearing in mind that Xenophon had covered most of the literary genres meant to educate, one might ask why he would not try to meet the needs of those seeking advice and knowledge in wisdom literature. He was obviously aware of it, as he otherwise would not have mentioned its influence on the young, knowledge-thirsty *kaloī kagathoi* in the *Memorabilia*.⁴⁶ If the *Hiero* was written under the influence of wisdom literature, it would explain why Xenophon once more felt the need to use the subject of autocratic rule as he had in the *Cyropaedia*.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ See Snell 1971: 44–45; Leão 2010: 405, 411–412; Jordović 2019: 131–135.

⁴⁵ See Gray 1992: 60, 66.

⁴⁶ Xen. *Mem.* 1.6.14 (*tous thēsauros tōn palai sophōn andrōn, hous ekeinoi katelipon en bibliois grapsantes*); 4.2.1 (*grammata polla syneilegmenon poētōn te kai sophistōn*); 4.2.9 (*tas de tōn sophōn andrōn gnōmas*); see also Aeschin. 3.134–136; Isoc. 1.51–52; 2.13; Pl. *Leg.* 810e–811a, 886b–e; Diog. Laert. 6.31; cf. Horne & Fritz 1935: 78; Barns 1950: 132.

⁴⁷ See Gray 1986: 118–121.

Nonetheless, there are some questions that are still left unresolved. Uncertainty persists as to why he avoided writing a dialogue between one of the Seven Sages and an infamous tyrant. For this, there are two complementary explanations. The first is that by choosing a poet of renown but never counted among the Seven Sages, Xenophon cleverly evaded having his work reduced to yet another anecdote of an encounter between a sage and a tyrant. Secondly, as shown in the *Cyropaedia* and *Agésilas*, he tended to merging several genres in one work.⁴⁸ By not quite adapting the *Hiero* to the standards of wisdom literature, he left room for the subtle inclusion of elements from other genres, as for instance the Mirror of Tyrants and Socratic literature.

2. Simonides and Plato

Despite all this, the question remains of why Xenophon chose Simonides and Hiero as the main and only protagonists of this work. Regrettably, the scant sources available only allow us to make assumptions.

In the Archaic era, poets developed various strategies to bolster their authority with their audience. One of these was to claim they were endowed with wisdom.⁴⁹ This is probably why Simonides is the oldest known source to speak of the Seven Sages as bearers of wisdom.⁵⁰ In the *Wasps*, Aristophanes tells us that Simonides competed with Lasus, whom some sources counted among the Seven Sages.⁵¹ In addition, Simonides enjoyed the reputation of being extremely clever.⁵² Although considered to be a great poet, there were numerous anecdotes in circulation that did not always present him in the best light.⁵³ He was believed to have been a miser and to have enjoyed the company of unscrupulous power mongers.⁵⁴ There are brief anecdotes linking him with Themistocles.⁵⁵ It is said that he stayed at the court of the Peisistratids.⁵⁶ He established close connections with the Scopades in Thessaly.⁵⁷ Simonides spent the last years of his life in Sicily. He is said to have resided some time at the courts of the tyrants Gelon and Hiero, where he helped bring about

⁴⁸ See Gray 1986: 122–123. Genre mixing is from a very early stage a widespread practice in Greek literature; see Foster – Kurke – Weiss 2019: 10–19.

⁴⁹ See Thayer 1975: 6–10; Itgenshorst 2014: 116–120.

⁵⁰ See Wehrli 1973: 199.

⁵¹ Ar. *Vesp.* 1401–1410, Diog. Laert. 1.42; see Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1913: 142, 148; Wehrli 1973: 203.

⁵² Aristot. *Rhet.* 1391a8–12; Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.60; *De or.* 2.86; Plut. *Quomodo adul.* 15c–d.

⁵³ *Anth. Pal.* 6.213; Theoc. *Id.* 16.42–7; *Vit. Aesch.* (p. 332 Page O.C.T.); Callim. *Aet. fr.* 64.1–4; Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 23; *De imit.* 2.420; Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.64.

⁵⁴ Xenoph. DK 21 B 21; Ar. *Pax* 695–698; Aristot. *Rhet.* 1405b24–7; Chamael. fr. 32 Wehrli; Plut. *An seni* 786b; *De curios.* 520a; Ath. 14.656d–e; P. Hibeh 17; see Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1913: 142, 148–149; Wehrli 1973: 203–204; Bell 1978: 31–39, 44, 61–62, 70–71; Lefkowitz 1981: 50–53.

⁵⁵ Cic. *Fin.* 2.32.104; Plut. *Vit. Them.* 1.1, 5.6, 15.3–4; see also Simon. T. 104, fr. 252, 325 Poltera [536, 627 PMG]; cf. Bell 1978: 40–43.

⁵⁶ In the Pseudo-Platonic *Hipparchus* Socrates says that the Athenian tyrant Hipparchus retained the services of Simonides with large fees and gifts. The son of Peisistratus did this with a view to educating citizens, so that he might rule over them as better men (Pl. *Hipparch.* 228c); see also Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 18.1; cf. Bell 1978: 43; Gray 2007: 33; Rawles 2018: 165–166.

⁵⁷ Pl. *Prt.* 339a; Callim. *Aet. fr.* 64.1–4; Ath. 13.125; Cic. *De or.* 2.86; Quint. *Inst.* 11.6.11–17; cf. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1913: 142–143; Poltera 2008, 455.

reconciliation with Theron, the master of Acragas. According to tradition, Simonides died in Acragas in 468, the same year as his patron Hiero.⁵⁸

Apart from pointing out Simonides' contacts with tyrants, there are three other significant features of the tradition surrounding him. First, as Mary Lefkowitz notes, anecdotes began to spread about him as early as the fifth century, and in the fourth century the story of his life outstripped interest in his poetry.⁵⁹ Secondly, as Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf has observed, Simonides as a biographical subject is placed between the Seven Sages and the Socratics.⁶⁰ Thirdly, as remarked by Fritz Wehrli, Simonides' *apophthegmata* belong to the same tradition as the *chreiai* of the Seven Sages and the proverbs of Hesiod and Homer. Unlike these, Simonides' *apophthegmata* are intrinsically linked to specific situations and reveal individual character traits. They share this feature with anecdotes about the Socratic and post-Socratic philosophers (e.g. Aristippus).⁶¹ These reasons seem to have led Xenophon to include reworked anecdotes about Simonides in his *Symposium*.⁶²

Coincidentally or not, Plato can contribute to a better understanding of the background to Xenophon's choice of Simonides as Hiero's interlocutor. The famous philosopher shows that Simonides wanted to be associated with the tradition of the Seven Sages, and in this he was successful. In the eponymous dialogue, Protagoras includes Simonides with Homer and Hesiod among the predecessors of the sophistic movement:⁶³

ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν σοφιστικὴν τέχνην φημὶ μὲν εἶναι παλαιάν, τοὺς δὲ μεταχειριζομένους αὐτὴν τῶν παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν, φοβουμένους τὸ ἐπαχθὲς αὐτῆς, πρόσχημα ποιεῖσθαι καὶ προκαλύπτεσθαι, τοὺς μὲν ποιήσιν, οἷον Ὅμηρον τε καὶ Ἡσίοδον καὶ Σιμωνίδην, [...]

Now, I maintain that the sophist's art is an ancient one, but that the men who practiced it in ancient times, fearing the odium attached to it, disguised it, masking it sometimes as poetry, as Homer and Hesiod and Simonides did, [...]

Further on in the *Protagoras*, after naming the Seven Sages, Socrates explains how Simonides, ambitious to be known for wisdom, deliberately disputed Pittacus's saying *it is hard to be good*:⁶⁴

τούτων ἦν καὶ Θαλῆς ὁ Μιλήσιος καὶ Πιττακὸς ὁ Μυτιληναῖος καὶ Βίας ὁ Πριηνεὺς καὶ Σόλων ὁ ἡμέτερος καὶ Κλεόβουλος ὁ Λίνδιος καὶ Μύσων ὁ Χινηεύς, καὶ ἔβδομος ἐν τούτοις ἐλέγετο Λακεδαιμόνιος Χίλων. [...] καὶ δὴ καὶ τοῦ Πιττακοῦ ἰδίᾳ περιεφέρετο τοῦτο τὸ ῥῆμα ἐγκωμιαζόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν σοφῶν, τὸ χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι. ὁ οὖν Σιμωνίδης, ἅτε φιλότιμος ὢν ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ, ἔγνω ὅτι εἰ καθέλοι τοῦτο τὸ ῥῆμα ὡσπερ εὐδοκιμοῦντα ἀθλητὴν καὶ περιγένοιτο αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸς εὐδοκίμησει ἐν τοῖς τότε ἀνθρώποις.

⁵⁸ Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 2.29d; 2.86–88; Timae. FGrHist 566 F 93; Pl. *Ep.* 2.311a; Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.60; Paus. 1.2.3; Ath. 14.656d–e; see also Diod. 11.48.7; cf. Lesky ³1971: 219; Lefkowitz 1981: 67; Molyneux 1992: 220–233, esp. 224–225, 231–233; Poltera 2008: 7; Morgan 2015: 93–96.

⁵⁹ Lefkowitz 1981: 56; Molyneux 1992: 233–236; see also Nagy 1989: 69–77, esp. 69–72.

⁶⁰ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1922: 112–113; see also Wehrli 1973: 202–203; Gray 1998: 106; Poltera 2008: 7.

⁶¹ See Wehrli 1973: 202–205.

⁶² See Gray 1992: 58–75, esp. 59–67, 70–71.

⁶³ Pl. *Prt.* 316d (trans. S. Lombardo & K. Bell); cf. Bell 1978: 83.

⁶⁴ Pl. *Prt.* 343a–c (trans. S. Lombardo & K. Bell with minor changes); cf. Bell 1978: 77–80, 85; Manuwald 1999: 143; Kurke 2011: 277–287, 303–305; Rawles 2018: 164.

We're talking about men like Thales of Miletus, Pittacus of Mytilene, Bias of Priene, our own Solon, Cleobulus of Lindus, Myson of Chen, and, the seventh in the list, Chilon of Sparta. [...] It was in this context that the saying of Pittacus—*It is hard to be good*—was privately circulated with approval (*enkōmiazein*) among the sages. Then Simonides, ambitious to get a name for wisdom, saw that if he could score a takedown against this saying, as if it were a famous wrestler, and get the better of it, he would himself become famous in his own lifetime.

Obviously stating a commonly-held opinion, Socrates ironically observes in the *Republic* that Simonides is a wise and godlike man (*sophos ... kai theios anēr*); later, in a discussion with Polemarchus, he counts him as one of the wise and blessed to whom Pittacus and Bias belong.⁶⁵

Other places where Plato mentions Simonides are no less significant. In the *Protagoras*, Socrates associates him with Prodicus in the context of Hesiod's and Prodicus's notion of the hard path of virtue and the easy path of vice, which, as illustrated by the *Memorabilia*, plays an important role in Xenophon's thought:⁶⁶

καὶ ἴσως ἂν φαίη Πρόδικος ὄδε καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ καθ' Ἡσίοδον γενέσθαι μὲν ἀγαθὸν χαλεπὸν εἶναι·
τῆς γὰρ ἀρετῆς ἔμπροσθεν τοὺς θεοὺς ἰδρῶτα θεῖναι· ὅταν δέ τις αὐτῆς εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηται, ῥηϊδίην
δῆπειτα πέλειν, χαλεπήν περ εὐόσων, ἐκτῆσθαι.

And if being is not the same as becoming, Simonides does not contradict himself. Perhaps Prodicus and many others might agree with Hesiod that it is difficult to become good:

*The gods put Goodness where we have to sweat
To get at her. But once you reach the top
She's as easy to have as she was hard at first.*

The *Protagoras* dialogue perhaps contributed in yet another way to Xenophon's decision to choose Simonides as Hiero's interlocutor. Here, the controversy on the meaning of Simonides' ode addressed to Scopas is key:⁶⁷

ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι χαλεπόν,
χερσίν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόφ' τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου
τετυγμένον.

*For a man to become good truly is hard,
in hands, feet and mind foursquare,
blamelessly built.*

⁶⁵ Pl. *Rep.* 331e, 335e; cf. Thayer 1975: 8.

⁶⁶ Pl. *Prt.* 340c–d (trans. S. Lombardo & K. Bell); see also 325e–326a, 339d–340d (Prodikos, Homer, Hesiod, Simonides); *Rep.* 363d–364d (Adeimantus, *bios adikos vs. bios dikaios*, Hesiod, Homer); *Leg.* 718d–e (Hesiod); Simon. fr. 256, 257 Poltera [541, 579 PMG]; Hes. *Op.* 285–292, esp. 290–292; DK 84B2; Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.20–34; Ar. *Ran.* 1030–1036; Isoc. 2.42–44; cf. Friedländer 1913: 563–564; West 1978: 229–230; Manuwald 1999: 320; Poltera 2008: 197–201, 435–448; Ford 2010: 150; Stamatopoulou 2017: 119–120; see also Jordović 2019: 108–120.

⁶⁷ Pl. *Prt.* 339a–346d, esp. 339b (Simon. fr. 260 Poltera [542 PMG]); trans. S. Lombardo & K. Bell); see also Arist. *Met.* 1.2, 982b24–983a11; cf. Poltera 2008: 203–209, 454–467, esp. 455–457; Kurke 2011: 121–122.

Opinion is divided as to the sort of ethic Simonides advocates in the poem.⁶⁸ The answer to this question, however, is less germane to an understanding of *Hiero* than is Plato's response to it. Following a prolonged debate on how the verses should be interpreted, Socrates takes the view that Simonides was not so uneducated as to say that he praised all who did nothing bad willingly, as if anyone actually did bad things willingly. Socrates is convinced that none of the wise men think anyone does wrong or bad of his own volition; they only do so unwillingly. Even Simonides did not eulogise tyrants voluntarily; he was compelled to:⁶⁹

οὐ γὰρ οὕτως ἀπαιδευτος ἦν Σιμωνίδης, ὥστε τούτους φάσαι ἐπαινεῖν, ὅς ἂν ἐκὼν μηδὲν κακὸν ποιῆ, ὡς ὄντων τινῶν οἱ ἐκόντες κακὰ ποιοῦσιν. ἐγὼ γὰρ σχεδὸν τι οἶμαι τοῦτο, ὅτι οὐδεὶς τῶν σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν ἡγεῖται οὐδένα ἀνθρώπων ἐκόντα ἐξαμαρτάνειν οὐδὲ αἰσχρὰ τε καὶ κακὰ ἐκόντα ἐργάζεσθαι, ἀλλ' εὖ ἴσασιν ὅτι πάντες οἱ τὰ αἰσχρὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ ποιοῦντες ἄκοντες ποιοῦσιν· καὶ δὴ καὶ ὁ Σιμωνίδης οὐχ ὅς ἂν μὴ κακὰ ποιῆ ἐκὼν, τούτων φησὶν ἐπαινέτης εἶναι, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ λέγει τοῦτο τὸ ἐκὼν. ἡγεῖτο γὰρ ἄνδρα καλὸν κάγαθὸν πολλάκις αὐτὸν ἐπαναγκάζειν φίλον τινὶ γίγνεσθαι καὶ ἐπαινέτην [φιλεῖν καὶ ἐπαινεῖν], οἷον ἀνδρὶ πολλάκις συμβῆναι μητέρα ἢ πατέρα ἀλλόκοτον ἢ πατρίδα ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν τοιούτων.

For Simonides was not so uneducated as to say that he praised all who did nothing bad willingly, as if there were anyone who willingly did bad things. I am pretty sure that none of the wise men thinks that any human being willingly makes a mistake or willingly does anything wrong or bad. They know very well that anyone who does anything wrong or bad does so involuntarily. So also Simonides, who does not say that he praises those who willingly do nothing bad; rather he applies the term 'willingly' to himself. He perceived that a good man, an honorable man, often forces himself to love and praise someone utterly different from himself, one's alienated father perhaps, or mother, or country.

The unspoken message is that the famous poet was not truly free. This standpoint mirrors Plato's line of thinking in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* that the tyrant's evils stand in direct correlation to his complete lack of freedom.⁷⁰ As will be later shown, Xenophon adopts this view in the first part of the *Hiero*, only to dispute it in the second part by letting Simonides elaborate how a tyrant can be re-educated.

Socrates' conclusion that discussing poetry is similar to second-rate drinking parties of the agora crowd brings an end to the controversy over the meaning of Simonides' verses in the *Protagoras*. The *kaloi kagathoi* avoid such discussions, because almost everyone has a different opinion about what the poets say. Men of culture prefer instead to converse directly with each other, and rely on their own powers of speech to test one another. It is these people who should be imitated. Therefore, all participants in the discussion should put the poets aside and converse directly with each other to test the truth and their own ideas.

⁶⁸ See Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1913: 159–191, esp. 165–180; Bowra 1934: 230–239; Woodbury 1953: 135–163, esp. 151–163; Adkins 1960: 166–167, 196–197, 355–359, esp. 355–359; Donlan 1969: 71–95, esp. 82–90; Thayer 1975: 20–25; Dickie 1978: 21–33; Schütrumpf 1987: 11–23; Most 1994: 134–147; Beresford 2009: 185–220, esp. 195–214; Manuwald 2010: 1–24, esp. 6–23.

⁶⁹ Pl. *Pr.* 345d–346a (trans. S. Lombardo & K. Bell), 346b; see Manuwald 1999: 328–329, 347–351; Rawles 2018: 164–165. Giovanni Ferarri (1989: 102) notes that Socrates interprets the poem in a manner that “Simonides sounds suspiciously like Socrates himself.”

⁷⁰ See Jordović 2019: 64–66, 96, 98, 161.

The moral is that analysis of poetry is of questionable didactic value; the right path is philosophy.⁷¹

Polemarchus in the *Republic* declares that, according to Simonides, it is just to give to each what is owed to him. As the discussion continues, Socrates calls Simonides wise and places him on par with Pittacus and Bias. However, Socrates disputes that the famous poet really meant what Polemarchus' said. According to him, the proverb that it is just to benefit friends and harm enemies belongs to people such as the tyrant Periander, the Macedonian King Perdiccas, the Great King Xerxes and the Theban politician Ismenias, who (mistakenly) believed themselves to have great power.⁷² In Socrates' view it is never just to harm anyone, which is why a wise man cannot present the view that it is just to render to each his due. The tacit conclusion is that Simonides was not truly wise, since he perceived justice in the same way as do unscrupulous and power-hungry individuals.⁷³ The *Memorabilia* show that the tenet to harm one's enemies and help one's friends (reciprocity) occupies a central position in Xenophon's scale of values.⁷⁴ It is therefore not surprising that in the *Hiero* Simonides is designated as the wise man, and that his crucial advice to the master of Syracuse is to treat his subjects according to the principle of reciprocity.⁷⁵

Following Thrasymachus's speech on the nature of justice in the *Republic*, Glaucon goes on to contrast the fates of the perfectly just and the perfectly unjust man, which in wisdom literature corresponds to the encounter between the sage and the tyrant.⁷⁶ His argument is augmented by Adeimantus, who, with the help of the antithesis *dokein-einai*, or *doxa-alētheia*, shows the destructivity of the conventional lauding of justice, since it praises justice for the benefit it brings rather than for itself.⁷⁷ Adeimantus's quotation from Hesiod's verses on the hard road of virtue and the easy road of vice points to a connection between this idea, which Xenophon invokes in the *Memorabilia*, and Glaucon's story about the perfectly just and perfectly unjust man.⁷⁸ Among the poets cited by Adeimantus but not explicitly named is Simonides. In an allusion to him, Adeimantus ironically observes how the *sophoi* have said that *seeming masters the truth and is lord of happiness (to dokein kai tan alatheian biatai kai kyrion eudaimonias)*. This saying coincides with the message of the first part of *Hiero*, in which Simonides speaks of the happiness of a tyrant, and Hiero reveals its illusory nature.⁷⁹ Like Plato, Xenophon was aware that the *doxa-alētheia* dichotomy is one of the

⁷¹ Pl. *Prt.* 347c–348a; see also *Hp. mi* 365d; cf. Ferarri 1989: 102–103; Manuwald 1999: 354–355. Socrates remarks in the *Apology* that the poets compose their poems without any understanding of what they say, but by some inborn talent and inspiration (Pl. *Ap.* 22a–b).

⁷² Pl. *Rep.* 331d–e, 335e–336a (Simon. T. 86 Poltera [PMG 642]); cf. Poltera 2008: 76–77. This standpoint is in the *Gorgias* rebutted with the antithesis *doxa-alētheia* (*Grg.* 466b–467b, 470d–471d); see Jordović 2019: 60, 64–65, 146–147, 151–153, 235.

⁷³ Cf. Pl. *Tht.* 152b. In the *Greater Hippias* the distinction between the sophists and the ancient wise men (Bias, Pittacus, Thales etc.) is that the latter kept away from the affairs of state (*Hp. mai.* 281b–282a).

⁷⁴ See, e.g., Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.28, 2.1–3; 4.2.16–19, 4.21–25.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., Xen. *Hier.* 8.2–7; 9.1–11; 10.13–15; cf. Sevieri 2004: 282.

⁷⁶ Pl. *Rep.* 360e–362c, see Jordović 2019: 55, 161–163.

⁷⁷ Pl. *Rep.* 362a–367e; see Jordović 2019: 154.

⁷⁸ Pl. *Rep.* 364c–d; Hes. *Op.* 287–291; cf. also Beresford 2009: 198–214, esp. 211–212.

⁷⁹ Pl. *Rep.* 365b–c; Simon fr. 308 Poltera [PMG 598]; cf. Donlan 1969: 90–95, esp. 93 with n. 53; Thayer 1975: 19; Bell 1978: 80; Poltera 2008: 243, 554–555.

foundations of the *nomos-physis* antithesis, but unlike Plato, he resolved it by means of the term *benefit*.⁸⁰ Xenophon, in deciding to portray Simonides as a sage in *Hiero*, lets us know that his views on the four important value notions (the hard path of virtue and easy path of vice; re-education of the tyrannical man; justice is to harm one's enemies and help one's friends; response to the *doxa-alētheia* challenge) are in complete conflict with Plato's.

Another contribution towards a better understanding of the background to Xenophon's choice of Simonides may be Plato's *Second Letter*. Scholars generally tend to consider it inauthentic, but it nonetheless occupies an important place in the Platonic tradition.⁸¹ It is addressed to Dionysius II and the dramatic action takes place sometime after 360.⁸² The *Second Letter* is significant because it, in the context of the symbiosis of ruler and poet, points to the need to merge wisdom (*phronēsis*) and great power (*dynamis*). Among the corroborating examples mentioned are Simonides and Hiero. Although neither the author of this text nor the exact date of its origin is known, it shows that, even in antiquity, parallels were drawn between Plato's links to the masters of Syracuse, Simonides and Hiero, as well as to Solon, Croesus and Cyrus.⁸³

πέφυκε συνιέναι εἰς ταῦτὸν φρόνησός τε καὶ δύναμις μεγάλη, καὶ ταῦτ' ἄλληλα αἰεὶ διώκει καὶ ζητεῖ καὶ συγγίγνεται· ἔπειτα καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι χαίρουσιν περὶ τούτων αὐτοῖ τε διαλεγόμενοι καὶ ἄλλων ἀκούοντες ἔν τε ἰδίαις συνουσίαις καὶ ἐν ταῖς ποιήσεσιν. οἷον καὶ περὶ Ἱέρωνος ὅταν διαλέγονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ Πausανίου τοῦ Λακεδαιμονίου, χαίρουσι τὴν Σιμωνίδου συνουσίαν παραφέροντες, ἃ τε ἔπραξεν καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· καὶ Περιάνδρον τὸν Κορίνθιον καὶ Θαλῆν τὸν Μιλήσιον ὕμνεῖν εἰώθασιν ἅμα, καὶ Περικλέα καὶ Ἀναξαγόραν, καὶ Κροῖσον αὖ καὶ Σόλωνα ὡς σοφοὺς καὶ Κῦρον ὡς δυνάστην. καὶ δὴ ταῦτα μιμούμενοι οἱ ποιηταὶ Κρέοντα μὲν καὶ Τειρεσίαν συνάγουσιν, Πολύειδον δὲ καὶ Μίνω, Ἀγαμέμνονα δὲ καὶ Νέστορα καὶ Ὀδυσσεά καὶ Παλαμῆδη ...

It is a law of nature that wisdom and great power go together; they exert a mutual attraction and are forever seeking to be united. And men love to converse with one another about them, and to listen to what the poets say. For example, when men talk of Hiero and Pausanias the Lacedaemonian, they like to recall Simonides' connection with them and what he said and did. Likewise they usually celebrate together Periander of Corinth and Thales of Miletus, Pericles and Anaxagoras, and again Croesus and Solon, as wise men, with Cyrus, as ruler. In the same strain the poets couple Creon and Tiresias, Polycidus and Minos, Agamemnon and Nestor, Odysseus and Palamedes.

Whether these parallels were in vogue before Xenophon wrote the *Hiero* or after is of no great matter. In either case, Xenophon undeniably made the right choice. In the first, he merely added to something already existing, while in the second, it can be presumed that contemporaries had no difficulty understanding *Hiero*'s tacit message. Here one must not lose sight of Plato's and Aristippus' visits to the court of the Syracuse tyrants, which undoubtedly increased interest in meetings between wise men and tyrants as a motif. The extent to which the reception of Plato and Aristippus in Antiquity was marked by these visits

⁸⁰ Xen. *Mem.* 1.7.1–4; cf. also 2.6.39; *Symp.* 8.43; DK 89.2; see Gigon 1953: 166.

⁸¹ See Neumann 1967: 165–167; Erler 2007: 309, 311.

⁸² See Neumann 1967: 164–165; Erler 2007: 311.

⁸³ Pl. *Ep.* 2.310e–311b (trans. G. R. Morrow); cf. Bell 1978: 84–85; Erler 2007: 311; Gray 1986: 121; *Id.* 2007: 31–32; Rawles 2018: 167–169.

to Sicily is illustrated by Diogenes Laertius, Diodorus of Sicily and Plutarch.⁸⁴ It would seem that here again the same saying is attributed to different sages (philosophers). According to Diogenes Laertius, Aristippus responded to a question from Dionysius the Elder as to why philosophers go to rich men's houses, while rich men no longer visit philosophers, by saying that while the former knew what they needed, the latter did not. According to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Simonides replied in similar fashion to Hiero's wife. In the *Republic* Plato condemns this saying without revealing its initiator.⁸⁵ Finally, Isocrates shows that the writers in the Mirror of Tyrants genre had Dionysius the Elder in mind when they wrote their works. While in *Evagoras* he emphasises that the master of Salamina was a greater ruler than Cyrus the Great, in *Nicoles or the Cyprians* he praises the achievements of Dionysius I.⁸⁶

3. The Mirror of Tyrants, Encomium and Epinicion

What defines the *Hiero* is that it was written in dialogue form. The significance of this becomes more apparent when we consider that it is Xenophon's only true dialogue. At the outset, he makes it clear that this literary form interacts with two noteworthy circumstances: first, it is a conversation between a poet (*poiētēs*) or wise man (*sophos anēr*) and a tyrant; secondly, the difference between the *bios idiōtikos* and the *bios tyrannikos* opens the discussion on tyranny.⁸⁷

The conceptual pair *tyrannos* – *idiōtēs* points to Xenophon's skilful combination of genres. The influence of wisdom literature is indicated by the fact that in Herodotus, the Lydian tyrant Croesus, in conversation with Solon, objects that the renowned Athenian statesman (sage) ranks his happiness below that of common people (*idiōtai*), such as Tellus, Cleobis and Biton.⁸⁸ In *Hiero*, too, the difference between *idiōtēs* and the tyrant uses the example of the gladness and happiness (*eudaimonia*), which the tyrant enjoys.⁸⁹

The dichotomy *tyrannos* – *idiōtēs* is also a distinctive feature of the Mirror of Tyrants genre.⁹⁰ I have elaborated in detail in other studies that the main impetus for this development came from Plato's *Gorgias* and *Republic*.⁹¹ In these dialogues the issue of re-educating the tyrannical man and instructing young, outstanding individuals is elucidated in the context of the antithesis *bios praktikos (politikos)* – *bios theōretikos (idiōtikos)*. This contrast is in turn congeneric with the dichotomies *bios tyrannikos* – *bios philosophikos* and *rhetoric* – *true politics (philosophy)*, and they all originate from the controversy over the role of *polypragmosynē* and *apragmosynē* in Athenian political life. In other words, Plato's

⁸⁴ Diog. Laert. 2.66–67, 69, 73, 78–82; 3.9, 18–23, 25, 29–30, 34, 36; Diod. 15.6–7, esp. 7.1; Plut. *Dion* 5; cf. Gray 1986: 120.

⁸⁵ Diog. Laert. 2.69; Aristot. *Rhet.* 1391a8–12, *Pl. Rep.* 489b; cf. Bell 1978: 44–47; Rapp 2002: 709. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1913: 148 with n. 1, 150 with n. 2) points to further concurrences between the anecdotes on Simonides and Aristippus.

⁸⁶ Isoc. 3.23; 9.37–39.

⁸⁷ Xen. *Hier.* 1.1–2; cf. Gray 2007: 106–107; Levy 2018: 29–30.

⁸⁸ Hdt. 1.32.1; cf. Gray 1986: 120; Jordović 2019: 132–134.

⁸⁹ Xen. *Hier.* 1.8, 2.3–5.

⁹⁰ For the notion Mirror of Tyrants and its relation to the Mirror of Princes, see Jordović 2019: 11–14, 160–164.

⁹¹ Jordović 2018; *Id.* 2019.

analogous application of these dichotomies makes clear that he associates *bios praktikos* (*politikos*) with *polypragmosynē* and rhetoric, and that, in his opinion, this path ultimately leads to the *bios tyrannikos*.

<i>polypragmosynē/polypragmōn</i> (politically active)	<i>apragmosynē/apragmōn</i> (politically inactive)
rhetoric (simulacrum of true politics)	philosophy (true politics)
<i>bios praktikos/politikos</i> (traditional politics)	<i>bios theōretikos/idiōtikos</i> (philosophy)
<i>bios tyrannikos</i>	<i>bios philosophikos</i> (philosopher-king)

It follows that, by rejecting tyrannical life, Plato also utterly repudiates the traditional way of doing politics and makes rhetoric (embodied by Isocrates' teacher Gorgias) co-responsible for the appearance of individuals such as Callicles.⁹² It seems quite logical to assume that Isocrates would regard this as a direct affront to his concept of education, and even more so because, by discussing the (im)possibility of re-educating the tyrannical man, Plato addresses the question of the correct education of young, ambitious individuals.

In the fourth century, Isocrates wielded especially powerful influence with respect to the Mirror of Tyrants and the encomium. He wrote his three Mirrors of Tyrants (*To Nicocles*, *Nicocles or the Cyprians*, and *Evagoras*) around 370.⁹³ The brief period it took him to write all three may be a good indicator of the attention the genre received at the time.⁹⁴ Again, this might have prompted Xenophon to consider it desirable or even necessary to write the *Hiero* in addition to the *Cyropaedia*.

The opening sentences of *To Nicocles* point out the difference between the life of a private person and the life of a tyrant.⁹⁵ In it, one can observe the attitude of the common people towards tyranny as being ambivalent. Because of the reputation, riches, and power it brings, they perceive it to be godlike; on the other hand, when they reflect on the terror and dangers that ensue from tyrannical power and how monarchs are forced to inflict injustice on their nearest and dearest, then they believe that any life is better than ruling over all of Asia at the price of such misfortune:⁹⁶

τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ιδιώτας ἐστὶ πολλὰ τὰ παιδεύοντα, μάλιστα μὲν τὸ μὴ τρυφᾶν ἀλλ' ἀναγκάζεσθαι περὶ τοῦ βίου καθ' ἑκάστην τὴν ἡμέραν βουλεύεσθαι, ἔπειθ' οἱ νόμοι καθ' οὗς ἕκαστοι πολιτευόμενοι τυγχάνουσιν, ἔτι δ' ἡ παρρησία καὶ τὸ φανερῶς ἐξεῖναι τοῖς τε φίλοις ἐπιπληῆξαι καὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἐπιθέσθαι ταῖς ἀλλήλων ἀμαρτίαις· πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ τῶν ποιητῶν τινες τῶν προγεγενημένων ὑποθήκας ὡς χρηὴ ζῆν καταλελοίπασιν· ὥστ' ἐξ ἀπάντων τούτων εἰκὸς αὐτοὺς βελτίους γίνεσθαι. τοῖς δὲ τυράννοις οὐδὲν ὑπάρχει τοιοῦτον, ἀλλ' οὗς ἔδει παιδεύεσθαι μᾶλλον τῶν ἄλλων, ἐπειδὴν εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν καταστῶσιν, ἀνουθέτητοι διατελοῦσιν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ πλείστοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων αὐτοῖς οὐ πλησιάζουσιν, οἱ δὲ συνόντες πρὸς χάριν ὀμιλοῦσι. καὶ γὰρ τοὶ κύριοι γιγνόμενοι καὶ χρημάτων πλείστων καὶ πραγμάτων μεγίστων, διὰ τὸ μὴ καλῶς χρῆσθαι ταύταις ταῖς ἀφορμαῖς πεποιήκασιν ὥστε πολλοὺς ἀμφισβητεῖν, πότερόν ἐστιν ἄξιον ἐλέσθαι τὸν βίον τὸν τῶν ιδιωτευόντων μὲν

⁹² See Jordović 2018: 369–385; *Id.* 2019: 108–120, 158–163, esp. 161–162.

⁹³ See Eucken 1983: 213–215; Blank 2014: 273 with n. 1.

⁹⁴ See Eucken 1983: 215; Alexiou 2010: 37–39.

⁹⁵ Isoc. 2.2–6, 8; see also 15.69.

⁹⁶ Isoc. 2.2–6 (trans. G. Norlin). George Norlin points out that: “The priestly office in Greece demanded care in the administration of ritual, but, apart from this, no special competence; it was often hereditary and sometimes filled by lot.”

ἐπεικῶς δὲ πραττόντων, ἢ τὸν τῶν τυραννευόντων. ὅταν μὲν γὰρ ἀποβλέψωσιν εἰς τὰς τιμὰς καὶ τοὺς πλοῦτους καὶ τὰς δυναστείας, ἰσοθέους ἅπαντες νομίζουσι τοὺς ἐν ταῖς μοναρχίαις ὄντας· ἐπειδὴν δ' ἐνθυμηθῶσι τοὺς φόβους καὶ τοὺς κινδύνους, καὶ διεξιόντες ὀρώσι τοὺς μὲν ὑφ' ὧν ἤκιστα χρῆν διεφθαρμένους, τοὺς δ' εἰς τοὺς οἰκειοτάτους ἐξαμαρτεῖν ἠναγκασμένους, τοῖς δ' ἀμφοτέρα ταῦτα συμβεβηκότα, πάλιν ὀπωσοῦν ζῆν ἡγοῦνται λυσιτελεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ μετὰ τοιούτων συμφορῶν ἀπάσης τῆς Ἀσίας βασιλεύειν. ταύτης δὲ τῆς ἀνωμαλίας καὶ τῆς ταραχῆς αἰτίον ἐστίν, ὅτι τὴν βασιλείαν ὡσπερ ἱερῶσύνην παντὸς ἀνδρὸς εἶναι νομίζουσιν, ὃ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων μέγιστον ἐστὶ καὶ πλείστης προνοίας δεόμενον. καθ' ἐκάστην μὲν οὖν τὴν πρᾶξιν, ἐξ ὧν ἂν τις μάλιστα δύνατο κατὰ τρόπον διοικεῖν καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀγαθὰ διαφυλάττειν τὰς δὲ συμφορὰς διαφεύγειν, τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων ἔργον ἐστὶ συμβουλεύειν· καθ' ὅλων δὲ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων, ὧν χρῆι στοχάζεσθαι καὶ περὶ ἃ δεῖ διατρίβειν, ἐγὼ πειράσομαι διελθεῖν.

For when men are in private life (*idiōtai*), many things contribute to their education: first and foremost, the absence of luxury among them, and the necessity they are under to take thought each day for their livelihood; next, the laws by which in each case their civic life is governed; furthermore, freedom of speech and the privilege which is openly granted to friends to rebuke and to enemies to attack each other's faults; besides, a number of the poets of earlier times have left precepts (*hypothēkai*) which direct them how to live; so that, from all these influences, they may reasonably be expected to become better men. Kings (*tyrannoi*), however, have no such help; on the contrary, they, who more than other men should be thoroughly trained, live all their lives, from the time when they are placed in authority, without admonition; for the great majority of people do not come in contact with them, and those who are of their society consort with them to gain their favor. Indeed, although they are placed in authority over vast wealth and mighty affairs, they have brought it about because of their misuse of these advantages that many debate whether it were best to choose the life (*bios*) men in private station (*idiōteuontes*) who are reasonably prosperous, or the life of princes (*tyranneuontes*). For when men look at their honors, their wealth, and their powers, they all think that those who are in the position of kings are the equals of the gods; but when they reflect on their fears and their dangers, and when, as they review the history of monarchs, they see instances where they have been slain by those from whom they least deserved that fate, other instances where they have been constrained to sin against those nearest and dearest to them, and still others where they have experienced both of these calamities, then they reverse their judgement and conclude that it is better to live in any fashion whatsoever than, at the price of such misfortunes, to rule over all Asia. And the cause of this inconsistency and confusion is that men believe that the office of king is, like that of priest, one which any man can fill, whereas it is the most important of human functions and demands the greatest wisdom. Now as to each particular course of action, it is the business of those who are at the time associated with a king to advise him how he may handle it in the best way possible, and how he may both preserve what is good and prevent disaster; but as regards a king's conduct in general, I shall attempt to set forth the objects at which he should aim and the pursuits to which he should devote himself.

This passage twice emphasises the benefits of *bios idiōtikos* over *bios tyrannikos*, only to demonstrate that this view may not necessarily be correct. The first advantage of the life of a private citizen is that there are many circumstances which contribute to his correct education (the absence of luxury, laws, freedom of speech, precepts of poets etc.). Tyrants, however, suffer from a lack of adequate education and honest communication.⁹⁷ The second advantage is that tyrannical rule only appears attractive because it inevitably entails many dangers and fears. However, the correct education by means of the Mirror of Tyrants can make up for both disadvantages of the *bios tyrannikos*. This idea has far-reaching implications, because if it is

⁹⁷ See Eucken 1983: 218–219 (with parallels to Plato).

possible to eliminate the deficiencies of tyrannical life, then Plato's argument that the traditional way of conducting politics is doomed to fail loses its validity. It is therefore not surprising that several scholars have pointed out that Isocrates' passage on the ambivalence of the many in respect to *bios tyrannikos* echoes Socrates' and Polus' discussion in the *Gorgias* as to whether the life of the unjust man (*tyrannos/rhētor*) is better and happier than the life of the just (*idiōtes/philosophos*). This debate, in turn, announces the argument between Socrates and Callicles on whether *bios praktikos* or *bios theōrētikos* is preferable.⁹⁸

The famous orator advises the young ruler to associate himself with renowned poets and sages.⁹⁹ Isocrates says that poets have given precepts for the common people (*idiōtai*) concerning how one should live, but they have neglected to lay down such principles for tyrants.¹⁰⁰ He admits that many of his counsels and proposals have been voiced earlier. He also points out that all people consider the most useful works of poetry and prose to be those that advise us on how to live. However, in spite of how much they stand to gain by them, the people do not like to listen to moral precepts. Hesiod, Theognis and Phocylides are said to have been the best counsellors on human conduct, but the people still prefer trifles to instructions (*hypothēkai*). And if someone were to compose a selection of the finest maxims (*hai kaloumenai gnōmai*) from the leading poets, even then the people would rather read the cheapest comedy.¹⁰¹ It is human nature to prefer what is pleasing to that which is useful. Therefore, the majority would rather listen to fiction than to the most profitable advice. For these reasons, we should admire Homer and the first inventors of tragedy, because, by merging myth and useful advice, they succeeded in getting people to listen to them.¹⁰²

In *To Nicocles*, Isocrates advises the tyrant to overcome the dichotomy *public* – *private*, as all his subjects' estates (in the end) belong to the ruler, and therefore he needs to take good care of them:¹⁰³

φυλακὴν ἀσφαλεστάτην ἡγοῦ τοῦ σώματος εἶναι τὴν τε τῶν φίλων ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν τῶν πολιτῶν εὐνοίαν καὶ τὴν σαυτοῦ φρόνησιν· διὰ γὰρ τούτων καὶ κτᾶσθαι καὶ σώζειν τὰς τυραννίδας μάλιστα ἂν τις δύναιτο. κήδου τῶν οἰκῶν τῶν πολιτικῶν, καὶ νόμιζε καὶ τοὺς δαπανῶντας ἀπὸ τῶν σῶν ἀναλίσκειν καὶ τοὺς ἐργαζομένους τὰ σὰ πλείω ποιεῖν ἅπαντα γὰρ τὰ τῶν οἰκούντων τὴν πόλιν οἰκεῖα τῶν καλῶς βασιλευόντων ἐστὶ.

Believe that your staunchest body-guard lies in the virtue of your friends, the loyalty of your citizens and your own wisdom (*phronēsis*); for it is through these that one can best acquire as well as keep the powers of royalty. Watch over the estates of your citizens, and consider that the spenders are paying from your pocket, and the workers are adding to your wealth; for all the property of those who live in the state belongs to kings who rule them well.

⁹⁸ Isoc. 2.4–6, esp. 5; Pl. *Grg.* 466a–480e, esp. 470d–472a; see Teichmüller 1881: 19; Ries 1959: 84–85; Eucken 1983: 221–222; cf. also Jordović 2019: 54–55, 108–120, 158–161, esp. 161.

⁹⁹ Isoc. 2.13; see Papillon 1998: 43.

¹⁰⁰ Isoc. 2.3, 7–8; see also 15.71; cf. Eder 1995: 155–156.

¹⁰¹ Isoc. 2.3, 7, 40–4; cf. Dihle 1962: 89–91. On the subject of *hypothēkai*, see Friedländer 1913: 558–603; Jaeger 1944: 103; Merkelbach & West 1967: 143–145; Martin 1984: 29–48, esp. 32–33; Kurke 1990: 90–94, 104–107; Nightingale 1995: 140–142, esp. 141. On the issue of *gnōmai*, *chreiai*, *apophthegmata*, see Horne & Fritz 1935: 74–89, esp. 74–80 (Isocrates, Xenophon: 78), 87–89.

¹⁰² Isoc. 2.45–49.

¹⁰³ Isoc. 2.21 (trans. G. Norlin); cf. 10.37.

In *Nicocles or the Cyprians*, Isocrates says that a major difference between a monarchy and other forms of government is that in the latter, men who enter office for an annual term retire to private life at the end of their term in office. It would then follow that only the tyrant is a true *homo politicus*, since his “term” is not time-limited. Thus in his case alone the antithesis *public – private* does not apply, because only monarchs understand the common good (*koinon*) as their own (*idion*), and not anyone else’s (*allotrion*) concern.¹⁰⁴ Isocrates in his encomium takes Dionysius the Elder and the Persian Emperor as an example of how autocrats can raise their countries to great power through war.¹⁰⁵

In *Evagoras*, Isocrates points out some other important features of the Mirror of Tyrants. Again, the conceptual pair *idiōtēs – tyrannos* takes on an important role. At the beginning of the encomium, Isocrates tells how the ruler of Salamina gave signs of his exceptional nature from an early age, so that everyone believed he would not spend his life as an *idiōtēs*. The kings of that time rightly feared him, and Evagoras ultimately did indeed achieve the position of a tyrant:¹⁰⁶

παῖς μὲν γὰρ ὢν ἔσχε κάλλος καὶ ῥώμην καὶ σωφροσύνην, ἄπερ τῶν ἀγαθῶν προπεδέστατα τοῖς τηλικούτοις ἐστίν. καὶ τούτων μάρτυρας ἂν τις ποιήσαιο, τῆς μὲν σωφροσύνης τοὺς συμπαιδευθέντας τῶν πολιτῶν, τοῦ δὲ κάλλους ἅπαντας τοὺς ἰδόντας, τῆς δὲ ῥώμης ἅπαντας τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐν οἷς ἐκεῖνος τῶν ἠλικιωτῶν ἐκρατίστευσεν. ἀνδρὶ δὲ γενομένῳ ταῦτά τε πάντα συνηυξήθη καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἀνδρία προσεγένετο καὶ σοφία καὶ δικαιοσύνη, καὶ ταῦτ’ οὐ μέσως οὐδ’ ὥσπερ ἐτέροις τισίν, ἀλλ’ ἕκαστον αὐτῶν εἰς ὑπερβολήν· τοσοῦτον γὰρ καὶ ταῖς τοῦ σώματος καὶ ταῖς τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρεταῖς διήνεγκεν, ὥσθ’ ὅποτε μὲν αὐτὸν ὄρῳεν οἱ τότε βασιλεύοντες, ἐκπλήττεσθαι καὶ φοβεῖσθαι περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἡγουμένους οὐχ οἷόν τ’ εἶναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τὴν φύσιν ἐν ἰδιούτῳ μέρει διαγαγεῖν, ὅποτε δ’ εἰς τοὺς τρόπους ἀποβλέψειαν, οὕτω σφόδρα πιστεύειν, ὥστ’ εἰ καὶ τις ἄλλος τολμῶν περὶ αὐτοὺς ἐξαμαρτάνειν, νομίζειν Εὐαγόραν αὐτοῖς ἔσεσθαι βοηθόν. καὶ τοσοῦτον τῆς δόξης παραλλαττούσης οὐδετέρου τούτων ἐψεύσθησαν· οὔτε γὰρ ἰδιώτης ὢν διετέλεσεν οὔτε περὶ ἐκείνους ἐξήμαρτεν. [...]

When Evagoras was a boy he possessed beauty, bodily strength, and modesty (*sōphrosynē*), the very qualities that are most becoming to that age. Witnesses could be produced for these assertions: for his modesty—fellow-citizens who were educated with him: for his beauty—all who beheld him: for his strength—all the contests in which he vanquished his age-mates. When he attained to manhood not only did all these qualities grow up with him, but to them were also added manly courage, wisdom (*sophia*), and justice (*dikaiosynē*), and that too in no ordinary measure, as is the case with some others, but each of these characteristics in extraordinary degree. So surpassing was his excellence of both body and mind, that when the kings of that time looked upon him they were terrified and feared for their throne, thinking that a man of such nature could not possibly pass his life in the status of a private citizen (*idiōtēs*), but whenever they observed his character, they felt such confidence in him that they believed that even if anyone else should dare to injure them, Evagoras would be their champion. And although opinions of him were so at variance, they were mistaken in neither respect: for he neither remained in private life (*idiōtēs*), nor did them injury: [...]

In this encomium it is also said that eulogies should praise contemporary figures. Isocrates explains the reason why this was not the case up until then by the human tendency to envy

¹⁰⁴ Isoc. 3.17–21; see also 31, 49, 51.

¹⁰⁵ Isoc. 3.23.

¹⁰⁶ Isoc. 9.22–5 (trans. La Rue van Hook), 27–8; see also 66, 72. Isocrates designates Evagoras several times as a tyrant (Isoc. 9.27, 32, 66); see Eucken 1983: 219–220.

contemporaries. This envy demanded that the subject of praise should be heroic deeds dating from the Trojan War or even earlier.¹⁰⁷ The unspoken reason is, presumably, Isocrates' intention to dissociate the Mirror of Tyrants from democratic political imagery. It often used mythical kings as a mouthpiece for pro-democratic views and as a means to discuss the unity of the city and the position of great men in public life.¹⁰⁸ This is substantiated by the fact that Isocrates uses the figure of the mythical king Theseus, but only in order to create a model for the Athenian demos to imitate. Isocrates' Theseus exercised supreme rule (*tyrannein*), but as a good, popular leader and not through the coercion typical of autocrats. He was even willing to hand over power to the Athenian people.¹⁰⁹

Isocrates refers to Evagoras as *basileus*, *monarchos*, *tyrannos*, *dynastēs*, *archōn* and even *politikos*. The simultaneous use of these terms, and that they also apply when referring to Nicocles, indicates that their use as synonyms must be intentional.¹¹⁰ The purpose is to transform the negative term tyranny into a positive one. In this way it is suggested that absolute power need not always corrupt absolutely. Isocrates goes even so far as to use tyranny as an umbrella term that encompasses important notions of good rulership. He notes that Evagoras possessed all the qualities of a king (*basileus*), he was democratic (*dēmotikos*) in his service to the people, statesmanlike (*politikos*) in his administration of the city as a whole, an able general (*stratēgikos*) in his counsel in the face of danger, and princely (*tyrannikos*) in his superiority in all these qualities.¹¹¹ Isocrates' usage of the word tyranny to show that it is possible to exercise supreme rule without yielding to the temptation to abuse it, is even more visible in the *Helen*. In this encomium, which was never intended to be a Mirror of Tyrants, Isocrates emphasises that Theseus did not oppress and enslave his fellow citizens. The mythical king did not strive (*zēloûn*) for such a life in spite of its external blessings, because he was cognisant that the inner being of such rulers is miserable and full of fear. At the same time, Isocrates explicitly says that Theseus ruled as a monarch, tyrant and good leader of the people (*dēmagōgos*), and he disputes the idea that those who rule by force can be called *archontes*.¹¹²

The famous orator also emphasises in *Evagoras* that, before him, encomia were not written in prose. The reason was that poets enjoyed a considerable advantage over prose writers due to the diverse figures of style at their disposal (poetic licence, fiction, metre, rhythm etc.). He therefore had an understanding of those who engage in philosophy and write on numerous subjects but do not compose encomiums:¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Isoc. 9.4–7; cf. Bruns 1896: 116–118; Münscher 1920: 14–16.

¹⁰⁸ See Atack 2012: 1–19; *Id.* 2014: 341–343.

¹⁰⁹ Isoc. 10.18–37, esp. 32–37; 12.126–129; see Atack 2014: 330–363; esp. 330–331, 339–340, 343–354.

¹¹⁰ *Basileus/basileia* (Isoc. 2.1–2, 6, 9–11, 13, 18–19, 22, 31–32, 36–37, 50, 53; 3.10, 23–26, 28–29, 33, 35, 38, 41–42, 56, 60; 9.20, 24–25, 35–36, 39, 41, 43, 46, 51, 69, 71, 78), *monarchos/monarchia* (Isoc. 2.5, 8; 3.15, 17–18, 22, 25–26, 54) *tyrannos/tyrannis* (Isoc. 2.4, 21, 34–35, 53; 3.11, 16, 22, 24–25, 28, 55; 9.27, 34, 40, 46, 64, 66, 78) *dynastēs/dynasteia* (Isoc. 2.5, 8; 3.10, 36, 44; 9.19, 26, 59); *politikos* (9.46); *archōn/archē* (Isoc. 2.31, 40; 3.10, 13, 63; 9.24, 26, 35, 43, 49). The opening passages of *To Nicocles* make especially clear that Isocrates' simultaneous use of these terms is hardly a coincidence (Isoc. 2.1–5).

¹¹¹ Isoc. 9.46. La Rue van Hook (*ad loc.*) remarks that in this passage the influence of Gorgias on Isocrates' style is obvious.

¹¹² Isoc. 10.32–37.

¹¹³ Isoc. 9.8–13, 35–6, esp. 9.8 (trans. La Rue van Hook).

οἶδα μὲν οὖν ὅτι χαλεπὸν ἔστιν ὁ μέλλω ποιεῖν, ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν διὰ λόγων ἐγκωμιάζειν. σημειῶν δὲ μέγιστον· περὶ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλων πολλῶν καὶ παντοδαπῶν λέγειν τολμῶσιν οἱ περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ὄντες, περὶ δὲ τῶν τοιούτων οὐδεὶς πώποτ' αὐτῶν συγγράφειν ἐπεχείρησεν. καὶ πολλὴν αὐτοῖς ἔχω συγγνώμην. τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ποιηταῖς πολλοὶ δέδονται κόσμοι [...]

I am fully aware that what I propose to do is difficult—to eulogize (*enkōmiāzein*) in prose the virtues of a man. The best proof is this: Those who devote themselves to philosophy (*philosophia*) venture to speak on many subjects of every kind, but no one of them has ever attempted to compose a discourse (*syngraphēin*) on such a theme. And I can make much allowance for them. For to the poets is granted the use of many embellishments of language, [...]

One of the chief reasons why Isocrates dedicated his work to the ruler of Salamina is because he acquired his throne through his own strength rather than through inheritance. The famous orator then cites Cyrus the Great as a historical figure who, in fact, existed and usually elicits the greatest admiration. While the first fact is not in dispute, the second one is since, according to Isocrates, Evagoras has in all respects surpassed the founder of the Persian Empire:¹¹⁴

ἀλλὰ μὴν τῶν γ' ἐπὶ τάδε γεγενημένων, ἴσως δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀπάντων, Κῦρον τὸν Μῆδων μὲν ἀφελόμενον τὴν ἀρχήν, Πέρσας δὲ κτησάμενον, καὶ πλεῖστοι καὶ μάλιστα θαυμάζουσιν. ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν τῷ Περσῶν στρατοπέδῳ τὸ Μῆδων ἐνίκησεν, ὁ πολλοὶ καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ τῶν βαρβάρων ῥαδίως ἂν ποιήσαιαν· ὁ δὲ διὰ τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ σώματος τὰ πλεῖστα φαίνεται τῶν προειρημένων διαπραξάμενος.

Nay, of those who lived later, perhaps indeed of all, the one hero who was most admired by the greatest number was Cyrus, who deprived the Medes of their kingdom and gained it for the Persians. But while Cyrus with a Persian army conquered the Medes, a deed which many a Greek or a barbarian could easily do, Evagoras manifestly accomplished the greater part of the deeds which have been mentioned through strength of his own mind and body.

Finally, Isocrates' *Evagoras* shows a different approach to the historical context than *Ad Nicoclem* and *Nicocles*. The latter contain only a rudimentary outline of the historical background, so the deliberation on the ideal ruler seems more abstract. In *Evagoras* the historical figure and his achievements are far more tangible but do not diminish the paradigmatic nature of the reflections it presents.¹¹⁵

Isocrates' opinions, as cited in *To Nicocles*, *Nicocles or the Cyprians* and *Evagoras*, allow for several conclusions. The contrast *bios idiōtikos* – *bios tyrannikos* in Isocrates' *Mirror of Tyrants* has, as already noted, an undoubtedly Platonic background. But Isocrates gives a response diametrically opposed to this controversy. *To Nicocles* deliberately accentuates the downsides of *bios tyrannikos* in order to extol the benefit the *Mirror of Tyrants* brings to the ruler (reader). The possibility of (re-)educating the tyrant is also implied by Isocrates' intentional use of different terms to denote the power of the ruler of Salamis, as it indicates that absolute power need not necessarily corrupt absolutely. The fact that the tyrant can actually be taught highlights not only the paradigmatic quality of this

¹¹⁴ Isoc. 9.35–39, esp. 37 (trans. La Rue van Hook); cf. also 2.5. For the encomiastic character of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, see Zimmermann 1989: 103–105.

¹¹⁵ Isoc. 9.12–18 (ancestry), 19–21 (the history of the kingdom of Salamis), youth (22–24), achievements and rule (41–46), the impact of his government on the state (47–50); see Eucken 1983: 214, 265 with n. 157.

idealized *bios tyrannikos*, but also the belief that all the shortcomings of the traditional way of doing politics can be remedied. Moreover, Isocrates' tyrant is obviously willing to embrace philosophy. However, Isocrates' vision of philosophy is in many aspects the inverse of Plato's.¹¹⁶ The conclusion that Isocrates implicitly establishes a tyrant-philosopher paradigm as a contrast to Plato's philosopher-king concept is therefore not entirely unfounded.¹¹⁷ *To Nicocles* also shows an affinity between the encomium and the poetic tradition of dispensing advice on how life should be lived. The use of the terms *hypothēkai* and *gnōmai* clearly indicate that he understands this tradition as being close to wisdom literature.

However, the establishment of a connection between his work, poetry and wisdom literature does not prevent Isocrates from saying that the Mirror of Tyrants is still a new literary genre. Its primary novelty is not that it is written in prose, although this too is significant, but that it advises rulers (*tyrannos / monarchos / dynastēs*) rather than private persons (*idiōtai*). Isocrates also points out that success in dispensing advice does not depend merely on the degree of its usefulness, but also on whether it has been delivered in an interesting manner. This work shows that a good ruler should not make a distinction between his own estate and the property of the citizens, or in other words, he should not succumb to the dichotomy *public – private*. In *Nicocles or the Cyprians* Isocrates explains that the conceptual pair *tyrannos – idiōtēs* is akin to the distinction between political and apolitical, and that a connection exists with the *public – private* dichotomy. By remarking in *Evagoras* that those who devote themselves to philosophy have written on many subjects but failed to compose encomiums, Isocrates not only criticizes those philosophers (presumably Plato), but also makes clear that this type of writing should be categorized as philosophical. Isocrates emphasises in the same work that one of the central features of the Mirror of Tyrants should be the celebration of contemporary figures. The comparison of Evagoras with Cyrus the Great shows that the notion of contemporary does not have to be taken in the narrowest sense, but covers any figure who does not spring from the distant past or mythical tradition.¹¹⁸ The same comparison shows that Cyrus the Great was included in the circle of personalities addressed by the Mirror of Tyrants genre, and the choice of the Great King as a subject of praise was not entirely advantageous. It should also be pointed out that both *To Nicocles* and *Evagoras* say that the majority of people perceived tyrannical power to be godlike and as the greatest and most perfect happiness.¹¹⁹ This shows that the Mirror of Tyrants as a genre adopted the subject of a tyrant's extreme happiness not only from Athenian political experience but also from wisdom literature. Finally, Isocrates' writings make clear that the visibility of the historical context is not fixed. The author can give it a more prominent role in one Mirror of Tyrants, only to put it aside in another.

Even a cursory reading tells us that Xenophon's *Hiero* matches all the features of the Mirror of Tyrants in Isocrates: it is a work of prose; the *idiōtēs – tyrannos* distinction plays

¹¹⁶ See Ries 1959: 21–35, 87; Eucken 1983: 238–239; *Id.* 2003: 39–40; Nehamas 1990: 4–5; Walter 1996: 437–440; Ober 1998: 251–252, 261; Morgan 2004: 131, 136; Böhme 2009: 21–43; Atack 2014: 344–345; Moore 2020: 210–217.

¹¹⁷ Isoc. 2.35, 50–51; see also 3.1–10; 4.10; 9.77–78, 81; 10.5; 12.26–29; 13.19–21, 261–266; 15.85, 266–267; Pl. *Grg.* 463a–d, 482a, 485a–d, 502d–503a, 517b, 526e–527d.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Bruns 1896: 118.

¹¹⁹ Isoc. 2.85–6; 9.40.

a key part; the first part of the dialogue emphasises the disadvantages of the tyrannical life, only to show in the second part how to overcome them; the tyrant is a contemporary figure; there is a link with poetry through the character of Simonides, and depicting the poet as *sophos anēr* connects it to the wisdom tradition; useful advice is wrapped in an intriguing scenario (a dialogue between a famous tyrant and a celebrated poet); and the topic is that of the tyrant's exceptional happiness. Xenophon's Hiero is also a complete *homo politicus*, chiefly reflected in his inability to ever again become an *idiōtēs*, and because every aspect of his life is marked by the fact that he is a tyrant.¹²⁰ The keynote of Simonides's advice to Hiero in the second half of the dialogue on how to avoid the negative features of tyranny is to overcome the *public – private* dichotomy and to be concerned with the common good, not as if it belonged to someone else, but as if it were his own.¹²¹ The possibility of transforming the tyrant is also indicated through the terminology referring to the ruler. The *Cyropaedia* is arranged around historical events, while in the *Hiero*, the historical context is almost completely sidelined.

Apart from *Nicocles* and *Evagoras*, Isocrates mentions only two autocratic rulers by name in his *Mirrors of Tyrants*: Cyrus the Great and Dionysius the Elder, which shows the powerful attraction both rulers held, directly or indirectly, for writers of this genre. It may be one of the reasons why Xenophon chose to write a *Mirror of Tyrants* with Cyrus the Great as his principle hero. Furthermore, it is worth recalling that Isocrates wrote a letter to Dionysius I. In the surviving prooemium, Isocrates explicitly states that credence cannot be given to the claim that the master of Syracuse honours only flatterers and despises those who offer him advice. The allegation was made by certain persons associated with Dionysius the Elder. Unlike them, Isocrates is convinced that Dionysius' judgement (*gnōmē*) and action (*praxis*) reveal the spirit (*dianoia*) of a learner, a listener and a discoverer.¹²² Unfortunately, we have no detailed information on the nature of his advice to Dionysius the Elder, but it seems to have had a Panhellenic tenor.¹²³ There is, however, a more subtle alternative to Isocrates' approach, especially if there is no need to explicitly address specific and current political issues such as Panhellenism.

Despite being the most powerful Greek of his age, Dionysius the Elder was infamous even during his lifetime.¹²⁴ This contradiction, however, might have favoured the selection of some other successful but less infamous tyrant of Syracuse for the main *dramatis persona*. Indeed, it makes sense to take Hiero as a tacit counterexample to Dionysius the Elder. Although he introduced a sterner regime than his elder brother Gelon, Hiero was never included among the more notorious tyrants such as Phalaris or Dionysius I.¹²⁵ There were telling circumstances in his favour. He took part in the victory over the Carthaginians at Himera (480) and defeated the Etruscans in the naval battle at Cumae (474). Very soon,

¹²⁰ Xen. *Hier.* 1.2, 12–13, 15, 17–19, 27–30, 33–34, 37–38; 2.8, 10–11; 3.8–9; 4.2, 7–9; 5.1, 3; 6.1–8, 12–13; 7.6–9, 12–13; esp. 7.12–13.

¹²¹ Xen. *Hier.* 9.11; 10.4–8; 11.1–11, 13–15; cf. Sevieri 2004: 284; Azoulay 2018: 53–54.

¹²² Isoc. *ep.* 1.4.

¹²³ Isoc. *ep.* 1.7, 9; *or.* 5.81; see Jaeger ²1963: 240–241; Eucken 1983: 135.

¹²⁴ See Diod. 14.2, 109.

¹²⁵ See Berve 1967: 147–152, esp. 148–149.

both victories came to be equated with those of Plataea and Salamis.¹²⁶ Gelon and Hiero undoubtedly worked hard at presenting themselves and their success in the best possible light and in Panhellenic dimensions, with the younger brother doing his utmost to push the elder into the background.¹²⁷ The Deinomenids gathered numerous poets and intellectuals to their court, but Hiero surpassed all other members of the ruling house.¹²⁸ His guests were the greatest poets of the age: Simonides, Pindar, Bacchylides, Aeschylus, and Epicharmus,¹²⁹ who contributed greatly to creating and disseminating his image not only as a rich and powerful tyrant, but also as an ideal ruler and patron.¹³⁰ The net result was that both contemporaries and later generations tended to view him in a generally favourable light (for a tyrant, that is).

It is also possible that Xenophon's choice of Hiero as *dramatis persona* was influenced by epinician poetry.¹³¹ One of the most significant pieces of advice from Simonides to Hiero is that the breeders of chariot horses and competitors in chariot races should be drawn from the whole city, because this would bring the ruler the greatest fame and the willing obedience of his subjects.¹³² Although the historical Hiero never behaved in this manner, the historical context of his rule is probably most palpable in this advice.

Pindar and Simonides undoubtedly belonged to different generations. Nonetheless, Pindar's poetic memorialisation of Hiero's successes coincides with the years when he, Simonides and Bacchylides were the main exponents of praise poetry in the Greek world. Pindar was the most renowned representative of epinician poetry; Simonides, however, was reputed to be the one who invented the genre.¹³³ Pindar's poems survived and enjoyed fame, while in Simonides' case the memory of his personality outshone his work.¹³⁴ Since the latter's epinicians survive only in fragments, an alternative is to take a closer look at the Boeotian poet's victory odes.

There are signs of a link between Pindar's poetry and the Mirror of Tyrants. Pindar, as observed by Leslie Kurke, has "adapted the subject matter and conventions of *hypothēkai* to the genre of epinician."¹³⁵ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff noted that Pindar anticipated the *peri basileias* literature in his advice in *Pythian Ode 1* that was dedicated to Hiero.¹³⁶ Werner Jaeger remarks that, "The eulogy on Evagoras is a prose parallel to the Pindaric encomium—as is shown by Isocrates' deliberate introduction of the old name,

¹²⁶ Hdt. 7.157–163, 165–167; Diod. 11.20–26, 11.51; Pind. *Pyth.* 1.47–55, 71–80; schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 1.152; see Harrel 2006: 119–133, esp. 131–132, Mann 2013: 30; Morgan 2015: 25–30, 36–44, 134–162, 326–327, 329–332, esp. 25–30, 155–157, 329–332.

¹²⁷ See Cummins 2010: 1–19.

¹²⁸ See Morgan 2015: 91–92.

¹²⁹ See Morgan 2015: 87–132, esp. 87–118, 131–132.

¹³⁰ See Mann 2013: 25–26, 43–45; Morgan 2015: 16, 92–93, 131–132.

¹³¹ Cf. Gray 2007: 35.

¹³² Xen. *Hier.* 11.4–12.

¹³³ See Lesky ³1971: 219–220; Bell 1978: 61; Sevieri 2004: 277.

¹³⁴ See Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1913: 137; Nagy 1989: 69–77; Hornblower 2004: 22–25, 37; Morgan 2015: 72.

¹³⁵ See Kurke 1990: 85–97, esp. 103; cf. West 1978: 24; Martin 1984: 32.

¹³⁶ See Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1922: 303; Jaeger, 1944: 85–86; Hornblower 2006: 159–162.

encomium”.¹³⁷ Other scholars did not restrict themselves to general observations and presented strong arguments that Pindar’s odes to Hiero influenced Isocrates’s Mirror of Tyrants.¹³⁸ William H. Race went furthest in this respect. He observed the overlapping of structure (a eulogy of a father framed by addresses to the son), themes (the advantages of earlier writers, the difficulty of praising contemporaries, the problems of *phthonos*, the superiority of poems over statues) and intention (exhortation to the next generation to maintain the high standards of their fathers’ achievements).¹³⁹

If correspondences indeed exist, then we may well ask why Isocrates did not want his Mirrors of Tyrants to be linked to Pindar. In *To Nicocles*, he cites Homer, Hesiod, Theognis, Phocylides and the first inventors of tragedy as representatives of didactic poetry but conspicuously omits Pindar.¹⁴⁰ In his entire opus, Isocrates mentions Pindar only once, in *Antidosis* 166, and then as a rival who has undeservedly outshone him. While Pindar was richly rewarded for a single line praising Athens, Isocrates’ native city behaved shabbily towards him, though he eulogized (*enkōmiazein*) it much more amply and nobly.¹⁴¹ At the beginning of the *To Nicocles*, Isocrates tries to introduce his Mirror of Tyrants as a new genre, not only because it is written in prose, but also because it addresses rulers rather than private persons. However, as the dialogue develops, the famous orator admits that many of his counsels and proposals have been uttered earlier.¹⁴² This inconsistency indicates that Isocrates was aware that the Mirror of Tyrants was not a total novelty. In view of this, the conspicuous avoidance of Pindar’s name was meant to forestall the possibility of an annoying rival once more overshadowing Isocrates’ achievements. It is possible that Xenophon was aware of all this. If so, in choosing Hiero he wished to show that his Mirror of Tyrants did not blindly follow Isocrates but instead harkened back to an older tradition. The implicit invocation of Pindar’s authority has an added advantage in that it further substantiates Xenophon’s position in relation to Plato, since the latter admired Pindar and liked to recite his verses.¹⁴³ In his odes, Pindar often resorts to expressions and ideas familiar to the typology of tyrants and the Mirror of Tyrants, and thus portrays a model of a just ruler.

In *Olympian 1*, Pindar sings of wise poets arriving at Hiero’s blessed hearth (*makaira hestia*) and that, like a good shepherd, he wields his sceptre in Sicily of many flocks.¹⁴⁴

In *Pythian 1*, Pindar advises Hiero not to heed the citizens’ envy (*phthonos*) of his fine deeds, since they perceive them as the successes of others (*esloisin allotriois*), but to

¹³⁷ Isoc. 3.7; 9.8, 11, 65; 15.166; Pind. *Ol.* 2.47; 10.77; *Pyth.* 10.10, 53; *Nem.* 1.7; 6.32; 8.50–53; Jaeger 1944: 85–86, 308 with n. 7–8; see also Race 1987: 131. Simon Hornblower’s (2004: 27) explanation that “the impetus to extravagant praise poetry came from the edges of the Greek world where outsize individuals demanded outsize celebration” indicates a close link between this genre and Sicily; see also pp. 17–18, 21–28.

¹³⁸ See Race 1987: 131–155 with n. 3; Papillon 1998: 48–54, 61; Hornblower 2004: 63–64 with n. 24, 66; *Id.* 2006: 159–160.

¹³⁹ Race 1987: 131–155. Terry Papillon (1998: 48–54, 61) and Simon Hornblower (2004: 63–64, 66; 2006: 159–160) also offer several observations in support of this influence.

¹⁴⁰ Isoc. 2.43, 48; see Jaeger 1944: 85, 96, 98, 104; Hornblower 2006: 159.

¹⁴¹ Isoc. 15.166; Pind. fr. 76.2; cf. Jaeger 1944: 85–86, 308 with n. 7–8; Race 1987: 131.

¹⁴² Isoc. 2.40–41.

¹⁴³ See Hornblower 2004: 65–66; *Id.* 2006: 160–162.

¹⁴⁴ Pind. *Ol.* 1.8–13; cf. Hom. *Il.* 2.243, 9.96–102; Aesch. *Pers.* 73–76, 241–242; Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.31–38; 3.2.1; *Cyr.* 8.2.14; see Mann 2013: 28–29; Morgan 2015: 92, 217, 225–227.

steer his men with the rudder of justice. There are many witnesses of both good and bad; if someone wants to enjoy a good reputation then let him be generous (towards the poets) and like a helmsman, set his sail to the wind and not allow himself to be deceived by glib profit seeking (*kerdos*).¹⁴⁵

The poet in *Pythian 2* tells his patron that he can display his success with a liberal spirit (*eleuthera phrēn*), as he is rich in possessions and in wisdom.¹⁴⁶ The poet further emphasises that Hiero's judgments are mature, and they allow him to praise the lord of Syracuse with a riskless utterance on every account.¹⁴⁷ Pindar calls on Hiero to learn what kind of man he is and to show himself to be so, to not fall for the schemes of insincere flatterers and deceitful citizens, and to exercise caution towards profit dishonestly acquired.¹⁴⁸ A feature of *Pythian 2*, which is important for Greek political thought, is that it contains the earliest tripartite classification into the government of one, of the few, and of the many. Pindar clearly holds that the personal qualities of the individual are more important than the characteristics of the constitution. His standpoint is that the straight-talking man excels in every form of government; at the same time, he avoids any ranking of the three types of rule.¹⁴⁹ In the closing verses of *Pythian 2*, the poet says that, although human fate is in the hands of the god who now raises a man up and then again gives great glory (*mega kydos*) to others, this does not heal the mind of the envious (*phthoneroi*). Therefore, it is best to bear this yoke lightly and to keep the company of good men (*agathoi*).¹⁵⁰

In *Pythian 3*, Pindar says that Hiero holds sway like a king (*basileus*) in Syracuse, is gentle with the citizens, does not envy the good (*agathoi*) and is a marvellous father to strangers.¹⁵¹ He is not merely a tyrant (*tyrannos*); he is a leader of the people (*lagetas*).¹⁵² He is attended by good fortune (*moir' eudaimonias*), but at the same time, the poet warns him that a secure life was not granted to either Cadmus or Peleus, who of all mortals had enjoyed the greatest happiness (*olbos*). Hiero should know that, for every blessing, the immortals grant men grief two-fold. Fools cannot bear this with dignity, but good men (*agathoi*) can by turning their better side outward.¹⁵³

The verses from Pindar anticipate some key elements of the Mirror of Tyrants. The ruler's personality outweighs the type of government in importance. A positive image of the tyrant is expressed by comparing him with a shepherd and a helmsman; the parallel use of terms such as *tyrannos*, *lagetas* and *basileus*; and by pointing out his righteousness, wisdom and graciousness towards fellow citizens (both the multitude and the elite). A recurring theme is the inconstancy of the ruler's (human) happiness, which is in the lap of

¹⁴⁵ Pind. *Pyth.* 1.83–93; cf. 4.272–274; Bacchyl. 4.3; 5.6; Xen. *Mem.* 1.7.3; 2.6.38–39; 3.3.9, 11; *Cyr.* 1.6.21–22; *Pl. Rep.* 488a–489a; see Morgan 2015: 341–344.

¹⁴⁶ Pind. *Pyth.* 2.55–57; see Bischoff 1938: 95–96; Morgan 2015: 190, 357.

¹⁴⁷ Pind. *Pyth.* 2.65–67; see Morgan 2015: 121–123, 191–193.

¹⁴⁸ Pind. *Pyth.* 2.72–83; see Morgan 2015: 194–196.

¹⁴⁹ Pind. *Pyth.* 2.86–88; cf. Isoc. 9.46; 12.132–133, 138; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.1.1; *Vect.* 1.1; see Ostwald 2000: 15–16; Hornblower 2006: 152–153; Morgan 2015: 197–198.

¹⁵⁰ Pind. *Pyth.* 2.89–97; cf. also Bacchyl. 5.49–55; see Morgan 2015: 121–123, 199–208.

¹⁵¹ Pind. *Pyth.* 3.70–71; see Mann 2013: 29–30; Morgan 2015: 283.

¹⁵² Pind. *Pyth.* 3.85; cf. 4.107; *Ol.* 1.89; see Hornblower 2006: 155; Mann 2013: 29; Morgan 2015: 289.

¹⁵³ Pind. *Pyth.* 3.82–89; cf. Hom. *Il.* 24.527–528, 535–540; Bacchyl. 5.53–55; *Hdt.* 1.32, 86.3–6; see Morgan 2015: 287–290.

the gods. The poet calls on Hiero not to strive for dishonest gain, to suffer the blows of fate with grace and dignity, speak straightforwardly, quietly suffer the burden of other people's envy, associate with the *agathoi* and not to listen to flatterers and their slander, which can be understood as advice on the importance of moral conduct for a good and successful rule.

Pindar's odes dedicated to the ruler of Syracuse can help us understand Xenophon's *Hiero* in yet another aspect. The juxtaposition of positive and negative patterns of behaviour is one of the key methods by which Pindar praises the tyrant. While Croesus (kindly excellence and good reputation) and Pelops (eternal glory) serve as models for individuals and rulers who have sufficient self-knowledge to establish a good relationship with both gods and people, Tantalus (insatiable nature), Typhon (attempted to overthrow the divine order of things), Phalaris (burned men in a brazen bull), Ixion (ingratitude and disregard for the distance between gods and mortals), Coronis (unfaithful to a god and tried to deceive him) and Asclepius (longed for what is out of reach: immortal life) serve as counterexamples of individuals guided by unrestrained and deluded ambition.¹⁵⁴ By this quite simple method, Pindar succeeds in distancing the *laudandus* from all the negative features of a tyrant and associating him only with what is positive in human behaviour and that of a ruler. The best example of this approach is the use of Croesus as a positive paradigm in *Pythian 1*.¹⁵⁵ Herodotus and Xenophon demonstrate that the Lydian king usually served as a negative model in Greek literature.¹⁵⁶ Pindar, however, overcomes this obstacle by placing Croesus in opposition to the worst possible tyrant in the image of Phalaris. When compared with an autocrat who allegedly burned people alive in a bronze bull, all deficiencies of the Lydian king seem petty. Even though he does not compare Hiero with any other tyrant, Xenophon essentially uses the same method. With the aid of Simonides's mirroring of established opinion on tyranny and Hiero's criticism of it, Xenophon separates the Syracusan tyrant from all the negative features of tyrannical power; in the second part of the dialogue, by means of Simonides's advice on how to become a happy tyrant, he goes on to associate him with the positive characteristics of a good ruler.

4. The Principal Message of the *Hiero*

From what has been said so far, we see that the composition and message of the *Hiero* were influenced by wisdom literature, epinician poetry and the Mirror of Tyrants. The characterisation of Simonides as a wise man was also strongly influenced by Plato. His unfavourable opinion of the celebrated poet involves a noticeably clear rejection of key

¹⁵⁴ Pelops and Tantalus (Pind. *Ol.* 1.23–98; Tyrt. 12.6–7); Typhon (Pind. *Pyth.* 1.15–35; Hes. *Thgn.* 820–880); Croesus and Phalaris (Pind. *Pyth.* 1.94–98; Bacchyl. 3.21–66; Diod. 9.18–19); Ixion (Pind. *Pyth.* 2.21–48); Asclepius and Coronis (Pind. *Pyth.* 3.6–66); see Hornblower 2004: 64–65; *Id.* 2006: 156; Mann 2013: 35–37; Morgan 2015: 119–121, 180–188, 217–218, 234–251, 309, 313–320, 341–345, 347, 353, 355–357.

¹⁵⁵ Bacchylides makes in his *Third Epinicion* a positive parallel between Croesus' and Hiero' generous veneration of the gods (Bacchyl. 3.11–70); see Mann 2013: 33–35.

¹⁵⁶ Hdt. 1.26–56, 69–92.2, 155–156, 207–208, esp. 30–34, 44, 46–47, 53, 55, 85–92.2, 207–208; Xen. *Cyr.* 4.1.8, 2.29; 6.2.19; 7.2.5, 9–29; 8.2.15–19; see Gera 1993: 206, 277–278; Bichler 2000: 244–255, 267–268; Lefèvre 2010: 401–417; Jordović 2016: 175–177; *Id.* 2019: 132 n. 349.

values in Xenophon's thought. However, the congruities between Xenophon and Plato do not end there.

The *Hiero* consists of two parts. In Part 1 (1–7), Simonides extols the blessings of tyranny, while Hiero claims that it is all an illusion and that a tyrant fares much worse in reality than the common man does. Having accepted this point of view, in the second part of the dialogue (8–11), Simonides explains what the other ought to do in order to rule to his own and the general satisfaction. The composition of the first part of the *Hiero* differs widely from the customary – the wise man praises tyranny and the tyrant condemns it. Moreover, in the course of the dialogue, the tyrant succeeds in demonstrating to the wise man that he is wrong. There is a simple explanation for these peculiarities. Simonides' lauding of the benefits of *bios tyrannikos* is easier to understand if we note that in several places he admits that it reflects the views of the masses,¹⁵⁷ so in the first part of the dialogue he is not so much presenting a personal viewpoint as repeating established opinion. Hiero's rebuttal of the theory of the tyrant's happiness is not a refutation of Simonides but rather of a common perception that tyrannical rule is a blessing for the potentate, because it brings him power, wealth, and pleasure.¹⁵⁸

That Hiero does not refute Simonides is important for yet another reason. Besides the fact that in Part 2 Simonides uses Socratic arguments, it directly challenges one of Plato's main points of critique. This concerns Socrates' deduction in *Protagoras* that Simonides did not eulogise tyrants voluntarily. He was compelled to, from which it follows that the poet was neither a sage nor a truly free man.¹⁵⁹ In this respect, it is no less significant for an understanding of the *Hiero* that Simonides' praise of autocratic rule coincides with Polus's glorification of tyranny in the *Gorgias*. Here, again, Plato emphasises that this is based on common belief.¹⁶⁰ Plato's Socrates reveals that conventional opinion on the tyrant's happiness is nothing other than a misconception.¹⁶¹

Two other circumstances indicate that Xenophon had the *Gorgias* in mind when he wrote. First, Hiero uses Socratic argument to reject the illusory notion of a happy tyrant.¹⁶² Secondly, in a context that discards this widely held opinion, it is stated in the *Hiero* that because of this impression that tyrants are happy, many yearn (*epithymein*) for tyrannical power and envy (*zēloûn*) the tyrant.¹⁶³ Envy, however, is a predominantly negative feeling and does not necessarily imply a profound desire for its object. The importance of this difference may be perceived in Isocrates's use of *phthonos* and *zēloûn* in *Evagoras*. He applies the first term when he says that, out of sheer envy, no writer so far had praised his

¹⁵⁷ Xen. *Hier.* 1.9, 16–17; 2.3–5; cf. Gray 2007: 36–37, 109, 112–113, 120.

¹⁵⁸ Archil. fr. 19 W; Sol. fr. 33 W; Aesch. *Pers.* 709–714; Bacchyl. 5.49–55; Pind. *Pyth.* 1.46; Soph. *Ant.* 506–507; *OT.* 1525–1526; Hdt. 1.30.2–4, 32–33; 3.40–44.1; Eur. *Alc.* 653–654; *Phoen.* 506, 549; fr. 286, 605; DK II B F 251; Isoc. 2.5; 9.40, 71–72; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.1.1; see Jordović 2019: 74 with n. 137–138.

¹⁵⁹ Pl. *Prt.* 346b–347a; see Manuwald 1999: 328–329, 347–351.

¹⁶⁰ Pl. *Grg.* 469a, 470d–e, 471e–472b, 473c–e.

¹⁶¹ Pl. *Grg.* 474c–480e.

¹⁶² V. J. Gray (1986: 115): “The identification of Simonides as a wise man who nevertheless seeks wisdom from others establishes his Socratic nature from the start. [...] Simonides uses the typical Socratic manner, ‘thinking’ and ‘supposing’ things are as he describes them. But the main Socratic feature is Simonides’ irony.”; cf. also 116–117, 120; *Id.* 2007: 34, 36; Schorn 2008: 188–193; Zuolo 2018: 567, 575.

¹⁶³ Xen. *Hier.* 1.9.

contemporaries; he uses the second to show that his praise of Evagoras is meant to encourage others to imitate this ruler.¹⁶⁴ The fact that *zēloûn* appears in *Hiero* in conjunction with *epithymein*, a term which is clearly positive towards the object of the feeling, shows that *zēloûn* cannot be translated as merely a feeling of envy, and that the emotion subsumes other meanings (to emulate, strive towards, look up to). For this reason, Xenophon also used the verb *phthonein*, rather than *zēloûn*, when he speaks of negative envy of the tyrant's happiness.¹⁶⁵ This versatile use of *zēloûn* in the *Hiero* fully matches the manner in which it is used by Polus and Socrates in the *Gorgias*.¹⁶⁶ We should bear in mind that Simonides also says that the most capable yearn for tyranny, a thought which would certainly have been more than acceptable to Callicles.¹⁶⁷

In addition to these similarities between the first part of the *Hiero* and Plato, there are others that are no less important. Frequently in the sources, and simultaneously with the celebration of the tyrant's happiness, reference is made to its transience, thus accentuating its illusory nature.¹⁶⁸ When Hiero points out the mere semblance of the tyrant's happiness, this does not depart from the traditional typology of tyrants. In one respect, however, it diverges, and this can be explained by Plato's influence. According to Hiero, every aspect of the tyrant's life and activity is determined by his position. Part 1, almost two-thirds of the entire dialogue, includes examples from all spheres of the *bios tyrannikos* (freedom of movement, bodily pleasures, love, respect for others, family, friendship, everyday joys, sleep, personal safety etc.). These show how he only seemingly possesses great power, for it is precisely this power which prevents him from achieving what is truly good for him.¹⁶⁹ Whatever he does, the tyrant will always act to his own detriment. He only appears to have complete freedom of action, because he does not enjoy true freedom of will. Compulsion (*anankē*) rules his life and he is forced to act unjustly.¹⁷⁰ The complete loss of control over every area of his life is expressed in Hiero's sentence that the tyrant spends his days and nights like someone whom all men have condemned to death. The way out is not a return to the life of a private person, as this is impossible – once a tyrant, always a tyrant.¹⁷¹ If there is any doubt left that Hiero is referring to anything other than absolute loss of freedom of will, it is dispelled by his conclusion that tyranny is a great evil from which the only real escape is suicide:¹⁷²

καὶ ἔγωγε τὸν μὲν οὕτω τιμώμενον μακαρίζω· αἰσθάνομαι γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐπιβουλευόμενον ἀλλὰ φροντιζόμενον μὴ τι πάθη καὶ ἀφόβως καὶ ἀνεπιφθόνως καὶ ἀκινδύνως καὶ εὐδαιμόνως τὸν βίον διάγοντα· ὁ δὲ τύραννος ὡς ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων κατακεκριμένος δι' ἀδικίαν ἀποθνήσκειν, οὕτως,

¹⁶⁴ Isoc. 3.6–7, 77–78; cf. 2.59.

¹⁶⁵ Xen. *Hier.* 11.15.

¹⁶⁶ See Jordović 2019: 74–77.

¹⁶⁷ Pl. *Grg.* 483b–e, 488b–490a; see Gray 2007: 110.

¹⁶⁸ See notes 153, 158.

¹⁶⁹ Xen. *Hier.* 1.10–7.10.

¹⁷⁰ When Xenophon, as noted by Melina Tamiolaki, speaks of the tyrant's life, on 15 occasions he employs derivatives of the term *anankē*; see Tamiolaki 2012: 577 n. 53: "It is astonishing how many times derivatives of the word ἀνάγκη appear in this context: *Hier.* 1.28, 2.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 5.3, 6.5, 6.15, 8.9, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.10, 10.7, 10.8.;" see Jordović 2019: 63–64, 68–69 (tyrannical man), 94 (Alcibiades), 96–97 (Callicles).

¹⁷¹ Xen. *Hier.* 7.10–12.

¹⁷² Xen. *Hier.* 7.10–13 (trans. E. C. Marchant). In 8.1 the phrase *athymōs echein* is used; see Gray 2007: 35, 135.

ὁ Σιμωνίδη, εὖ ἴσθι, καὶ νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν διάγει. ἐπεὶ δὲ ταῦτα πάντα διήκουσεν ὁ Σιμωνίδης, Καὶ πῶς, ἔφη, ὁ Ἰέρων, εἰ οὕτως πονηρόν ἐστι τὸ τυραννεῖν καὶ τοῦτο σὺ ἔγνωκας, οὐκ ἀπαλλάττει οὕτω μεγάλου κακοῦ, ἀλλ' οὔτε σὺ οὔτε ἄλλος μὲν δὴ οὐδεὶς πώποτε ἐκὼν εἶναι τυραννίδος ἀφείτο, ὅσπερ ἂν ἅπαξ κτήσαιο; ὅτι, ἔφη, ὁ Σιμωνίδη, καὶ ταύτη ἀθλιώτατόν ἐστιν ἡ τυραννίς· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπαλλαγῆναι δυνατὸν αὐτῆς ἐστὶ. πῶς γὰρ ἂν τις ποτε ἐξαρκέσειε τύραννος ἢ χρήματα ἐκτίνων ὄσους ἀφείλετο ἢ δεσμούς ἀντιπάσχων ὄσους δὴ ἐδέσμευσεν, ἢ ὄσους κατέκανε πῶς ἂν ἰκανὰς ψυχὰς ἀντιπαράσχοιτο ἀποθανομένας; ἀλλ' εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ, ὁ Σιμωνίδη, λυσιτελεῖ ἀπάγξασθαι, ἴσθι, ἔφη, ὅτι τυράνῳ ἔγωγε εὐρίσκω μάλιστα τοῦτο λυσιτελοῦν ποιῆσαι. μόνῳ γὰρ αὐτῷ οὔτε ἔχειν οὔτε καταθέσθαι τὰ κακὰ λυσιτελεῖ.

And, for myself, I count him a happy man (*makarizein*) who is honoured thus; for I perceive that, instead of being exposed to treason, he is an object of solicitude, lest harm befall him, and he lives his life unassailed by fear and malice and danger, and enjoys unbroken happiness (*eudaimonōs*). But what is the despot's (*tyrannos*) lot? I tell you, Simonides, he lives day and night like one condemned by the judgment of all men to die for his wickedness (*adikia*)." When Simonides had listened to all this he asked: "Pray, how comes it, Hiero, if despotism is a thing so vile (*ponēros*), and this is your verdict, that you do not rid yourself of so great an evil (*megalos kakos*), and that none other, for that matter, who has once acquired it, ever yet surrendered despotic power?" "Simonides," said he, "this is the crowning misery (*athliōtatos*) of despotic power (*tyrannis*), that it cannot even be got rid of. For how could any despot ever find means to repay in full all whom he has robbed, or himself serve all the terms of imprisonment that he has inflicted? Or how could he forfeit a life for every man whom he has put to death? Ah, Simonides," he cried, "if it profits any man to hang himself, know what my finding is: a despot has most to gain by it, since he alone can neither keep nor lay down his troubles with profit."

The thought that a tyrant is actually a wretched man (*athlios*) who has lost all freedom of will is an important moment in Plato's condemnation of tyranny.¹⁷³ In the *Gorgias*, Plato's Socrates says that tyrants (rhetors, i.e. politicians) are the least able to do what they really want, because even though they can kill or banish whomever they like and seize any property they wish, they do not do what is genuinely best for themselves. The very fact that, in this discussion, Socrates rejects Polus' idea that the power of the tyrant to kill whomever he wants or take the property he desires should be emulated (*zēloûn*) goes against any accidental coincidence with the *Hiero*.¹⁷⁴

Σωκράτης: φημί γάρ, ὦ Πῶλε, ἐγὼ καὶ τοὺς ῥήτορας καὶ τοὺς τυράννους δύνασθαι μὲν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν μικρότατον, ὡσπερ νυνδὴ ἔλεγον· οὐδὲν γὰρ ποιεῖν ὧν βούλονται ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν· ποιεῖν μόντοι ὅτι ἂν αὐτοῖς δόξη βέλτιστον εἶναι.

Σ. πότερον οὖν τὰ μεταξὺ ταῦτα ἔνεκα τῶν ἀγαθῶν πράττουσιν ὅταν πράττωσιν, ἢ τὰγαθὰ τῶν μεταξὺ; Πῶλος: τὰ μεταξὺ δῆπου τῶν ἀγαθῶν. [...] Σ. οὐκοῦν καὶ ἀποκτείνουμεν, εἴ τιν' ἀποκτείνουμεν, καὶ ἐκβάλλομεν καὶ ἀφαιρούμεθα χρήματα, οἴμενοι ἄμεινον εἶναι ἡμῖν ταῦτα ποιεῖν ἢ μή; [...] Σ. οὐκοῦν εἴπερ ταῦτα ὁμολογοῦμεν, εἴ τις ἀποκτείνει τινὰ ἢ ἐκβάλλει ἐκ πόλεως ἢ ἀφαιρεῖται χρήματα, εἴτε τύραννος ὧν εἴτε ῥήτωρ, οἴμενος ἄμεινον εἶναι αὐτῷ, τυγχάνει δὲ ὄν κάκιον, οὗτος δῆπου ποιεῖ ἃ δοκεῖ αὐτῷ· ἢ γάρ; Π. ναί. Σ. ἄρ' οὖν καὶ ἃ βούλεται, εἴπερ τυγχάνει ταῦτα κακὰ ὄντα; τί οὐκ ἀποκρίνη; Π. ἀλλ' οὐ μοι δοκεῖ ποιεῖν ἃ βούλεται. Σ. ἔστιν οὖν ὅπως ὁ τοιοῦτος μέγα δύναται ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, εἴπερ ἐστὶ τὸ μέγα δύνασθαι ἀγαθόν τι κατὰ τὴν σῆν

¹⁷³ *Athlios* (Xen. *Hier.* 2.3; 4.10; 7.12); *kakodaimonein* (Xen. *Hier.* 2.4); see Jordović 2019: 55, 63–65, 78 n. 165,

¹⁷⁴ Pl. *Grg.* 466d–e, 468a–469a, 478d–479a (trans. D. J. Zeyl with minor changes); see Jordović 2019: 23–24, 64–65, 74–76.

ὁμολογίαν; Π. οὐκ ἔστιν. Σ. ἀληθῆ ἄρα ἐγὼ ἔλεγον, λέγων ὅτι ἔστιν ἄνθρωπον ποιοῦντα ἐν πόλει ἃ δοκεῖ αὐτῷ μὴ μέγα δύνασθαι μηδὲ ποιεῖν ἃ βούλεται. Π. ὡς δὴ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐκ ἂν δέξαιο ἐξεῖναι σοι ποιεῖν ὅτι δοκεῖ σοι ἐν τῇ πόλει μᾶλλον ἢ μή, οὐδὲ ζηλοῖς ὅταν ἴδῃς τινὰ ἢ ἀποκτείναντα ὄν ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ ἢ ἀφελόμενον χρήματα ἢ δῆσαντα. Σ. δικαίως λέγεις ἢ ἀδίκως; Π. ὁπότερ' ἂν ποιῆ, οὐκ ἀμφοτέρως ζηλωτόν ἐστιν; Σ. εὐφῆμει, ὦ Πῶλε. Π. τί δὴ; Σ. ὅτι οὐ χρὴ οὔτε τοὺς ἀζηλώτους ζηλοῦν οὔτε τοὺς ἀθλίους, ἀλλ' ἐλεεῖν.

Σ. τί δέ; ἀθλιώτερος πότερος δυοῖν ἐχόντων κακὸν εἶτ' ἐν σώματι εἶτ' ἐν ψυχῇ, ὁ ἰατρευόμενος καὶ ἀπαλλαττόμενος τοῦ κακοῦ, ἢ ὁ μὴ ἰατρευόμενος, ἔχων δέ; Π. φαίνεται μοι ὁ μὴ ἰατρευόμενος. Σ. οὐκοῦν τὸ δίκην διδόναι μεγίστου κακοῦ ἀπαλλαγὴ ἦν, πονηρίας; Π. ἦν γάρ. Σ. σωφρονίζει γάρ που καὶ δικαιοτέρους ποιεῖ καὶ ἰατρικῇ γίγνεται πονηρίας ἢ δίκη. Π. ναί. Σ. εὐδαιμονέστατος μὲν ἄρα ὁ μὴ ἔχων κακίαν ἐν ψυχῇ, ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο μέγιστον τῶν κακῶν ἐφάνη. Π. δῆλον δὴ. Σ. δευτέρος δέ που ὁ ἀπαλλαττόμενος. Π. ἔοικεν. Σ. οὗτος δ' ἦν ὁ νοθετούμενός τε καὶ ἐπιπληττόμενος καὶ δίκην δίδους. Π. ναί. Σ. κάκιστα ἄρα ζῆ ὁ ἔχων ἀδικίαν καὶ μὴ ἀπαλλαττόμενος. Π. φαίνεται. Σ. οὐκοῦν οὗτος τυγχάνει ὢν ὅς ἂν τὰ μέγιστα ἀδικῶν καὶ χρώμενος μεγίστη ἀδικία διαπράξῃται ὥστε μήτε νοθετεῖσθαι μήτε κολάζεσθαι μήτε δίκην δίδοναι, ὥσπερ σὺ φῆς Ἀρχέλαον παρεσκευάσθαι καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τυράννους καὶ ῥήτορας καὶ δυνάστας; Π. ἔοικε.

Socrates: I say, Polus, that both orators and tyrants have the least power in their cities, as I was saying just now. For they do just about nothing they want to, though they certainly do whatever they see most fit to do (*dokein*).

S. Now whenever people do things, do they do these intermediate things for the sake of good ones, or the good things for the sake of the intermediate ones? Polus: The intermediate things for the sake of the good ones, surely [...] S. And don't we also put a person to death, if we do, or banish him and confiscate his property because we suppose that doing these things is better for us than not doing them? [...] S. Since we're in agreement about that then, if a person who's a tyrant or an orator puts somebody to death or exiles him or confiscates his property because he supposes that doing so is better for himself when actually it's worse, this person, I take it, is doing what he sees fit, isn't he? P. Yes S. And is he also doing what he wants, if these things are actually bad? Why don't you answer? P. All right, I don't think he's doing what he wants. S. Can such a man possibly have great power in that city, if in fact having great power is, as you agree, something good? P. He cannot. S. So, what I was saying is true, when I said that it is possible for a man who does in his city what he sees fit not to have great power, nor to be doing what he wants. P. Really, Socrates! As if you wouldn't welcome being in a position to do what you see fit in the city, rather than not! As if you wouldn't be envious whenever you'd see anyone putting to death some person he saw fit, or confiscating his property or tying him up! S. Justly (*dikaiōs*), you mean, or unjustly (*adikōs*)? P. Whichever way he does it, isn't he to be emulated (*zēlōtos*) either way? S. Hush, Polus. P. What for? S. Because you're not supposed to emulate (*zēloûn*) the unenviable (*azēlōtos*) or the miserable (*athlios*). You're supposed to pity them

S. Very well. Of two people, each of whom has something bad in either body or soul, which is the more miserable (*athliōteros*) one, the one who is treated and gets rid of the bad thing or the one who doesn't but keeps it? P. The one who isn't treated, it seems to me. S. Now, wasn't paying what's due getting rid of the worst thing there is, corruption (*ponēria*)? P. It was. S. Yes, because such justice makes people self-controlled, I take it, and more just. It proves to be a treatment against corruption. P. Yes. S. The happiest man (*eudaimonestatos*), then, is the one who doesn't have any badness (*kakia*) in his soul, now that this has been shown to be the most serious kind of badness. P. That's clear. S. And second, I suppose, is the man who gets rid of it. P. Evidently S. This is the man who gets lectured and lashed, the one who pays what is due. P. Yes. S. The man who keeps it, then, and who doesn't get rid of it, is the one whose life is the worst (*kakista*). P. Apparently. S. Isn't this actually the man who, although he commits the most serious crimes and uses methods that are most unjust, succeeds in avoiding being lectured and disciplined and paying his due, as Archelaus

according to you, and the other tyrants, orators, and potentates have put themselves in a position to do? P. Evidently.

In the *Republic*, Plato emphasises that the tyrannical man is least likely to do what he wants; his soul is insatiate, full of disorder, repentance and fear. The only one who is even more wretched (*athliōteros*) than him is the tyrannical man who does not live a private life (*bios idiōtikos*) but succeeds in becoming an actual tyrant.¹⁷⁵ Such a state of mind entirely corresponds to the condition described by Xenophon's *Hiero*.¹⁷⁶ There are other considerable coincidences between Part 1 of *Hiero* and the description of tyrannical rule in the *Republic*.¹⁷⁷

If the correspondences are well founded, the question arises as to why Xenophon's *Hiero* would advocate the same point of view as Plato's Socrates, as this might lead to the assumption that Xenophon actually agrees with Plato's negative opinion of Simonides.¹⁷⁸ However, this is contradicted by two facts. The first, as was previously mentioned, is that when Simonides speaks of the happiness of tyrants, he is presenting a general belief rather than his own. The second is connected to Part 2 of *Hiero*. One of the main conclusions of *Gorgias* and the *Republic* is that tyrannical man cannot change. For this reason, Socrates, despite all his efforts, fails in getting through to Callicles.¹⁷⁹ Part 2 of *Hiero*, however, describes a completely different situation. The on-going dialogue between Simonides and *Hiero* shows that a tyrant can change and achieve a happy life by following the poet's instructions, which are in fact nothing other than Xenophon's own ideas. This is reflected in Xenophon's terminology. The word tyranny is omnipresent in Part 1.¹⁸⁰ Yet, in Part 2 it is used only in respect to *Hiero* or in the context of the traditional type of tyrannical rule. For the model of rule proposed by Simonides the neutral word ruler is used.¹⁸¹ Thus, the purpose of *Hiero*'s utter despair is not to conjure up the impossibility of a transformation for tyrannical man, but to be the introduction to it.¹⁸² It is obvious that, when writing the

¹⁷⁵ Pl. *Rep.* 578a–c; see also 575a–576b.

¹⁷⁶ Pl. *Rep.* 577c–578a; cf. Adam 1902: 339; Gray 1986: 117–118.

¹⁷⁷ The good and wise are not his friends (Pl. *Rep.* 567b; Xen. *Hier.* 5.1–2); surrounded by bad people (*Rep.* 567d; *Hier.* 5.2); forced to rob temples (*Rep.* 568d, 575b; *Hier.* 4.11); at war with his city (*Rep.* 575d; *Hier.* 2.7–8); is actually poor (*Rep.* 573d–574a, 579e–580a; *Hier.* 4.8–11); acts against his own kin (*Rep.* 574a–c; *Hier.* 3.7–8); most wretched/unhappier than the private citizen (*Rep.* 576c, 578c; *Hier.* 1.8; 2.3, 6; 5.1; 8.10; 12–13); cannot travel (*Rep.* 579b; *Hier.* 1.11–12); cannot satisfy his desires (*Rep.* 579d–e; *Hier.* 4.7; 6.3–6, 8); the majority of people erroneously think that he is blessed (*Rep.* 576; *Hier.* 2.3–5). The concurrences between these two dialogues were already identified by Jean Luccioni (1948: 19–20). Agnese Gaile-Irbe (2013: 97–101; see also 93 n. 1) has recently given a detailed and instructive account on the parallels between Xenophon's *Hiero* and Plato's *Republic*; see also Gray 2007: 214–216.

¹⁷⁸ Vivienne Gray (1986: 116–117): “The action of the *Hiero* is unusual in that the interlocutor inflicts an apparent defeat on the Socrates figure and uses the Socratic method to inflict it, like the questioning mode.”

¹⁷⁹ Pl. *Rep.* 561b–c: “καὶ λόγον γε, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἀληθῆ οὐ προσδεχόμενος οὐδὲ παρῖεις εἰς τὸ φρούριον, [...] – And he doesn't admit any word of truth into the guardhouse, [...]” (trans. G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve); cp. also *Grg.* 492c; see Jordović 2019: 72–73, 103–104, 132–135.

¹⁸⁰ Xen. *Hier.* 1.1–2, 7–9, 11, 13–14, 18, 21, 26, 28–30, 38; 2.4, 7–8, 10–12, 14; 3.1, 6, 8; 4.2, 4–9, 11; 5.1–4; 6.8, 11, 13; 7.2, 4–5, 11–13.

¹⁸¹ Xen. *Hier.* 8.2–3, 5, 6; 9.3–5, 10.1 (*archōn/archē*); 8.4 (*dynatos*); 11.5, 7 (*prostatēs*); 8.1–2, 6, 10; 11.2, 6 (*tyrannos/tyrannis/tyrannein*); see also Schom 2010: 47–48.

¹⁸² Cp. Levy 2018: 32–33.

Hiero, Xenophon was guided not only by the desire to cover the genres of the Mirror of Tyrants, the encomium, and wisdom literature in another way; the work also directly criticises Plato's thinking that tyrannical man is incapable of change, a position explicitly linked to the view that the philosopher (the true wise man) should renounce the world of traditional politics in order to pursue genuine *politikē technē*.¹⁸³ Thus, Xenophon's refutation of Plato's standpoint is not to be confused with an advocacy of tyrannical rule. If it is indeed possible to teach the unteachable and to remedy the deficiencies of the worst type of political rule, then despite all its shortcomings, the traditional way of doing politics is not obsolete, provided of course that the advice of the author of the Mirror of Tyrants is taken to heart. It also means that, in Xenophon's view, philosophy and politics are not two antipodes, as Plato believes.

In conclusion it can be said that Xenophon's *Hiero* is a truly sophisticated work. It combines elements of several genres while subtly but uncompromisingly criticising a rival political thinker. Both Xenophon and Isocrates composed Mirror of Tyrants writings in order to counter Plato's complete break with traditional politics. This circumstance reveals not only the importance of this rift for the emergence of this genre, but also that Plato's contemporaries were already well aware of its radical and far-reaching effect on political thought.

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¹⁸³ See Jordović 2019: 72–73, 131–135, 158–159, 163.

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КСЕНОФОНТОВ ХИЈЕРОНТ И ЊЕГОВИ КОНТЕКСТ(И)

Резиме

Ксенофонов *Хијеронт* спада у дела античке политичке мисли која стално изнова привлаче пажњу и то пре свега зато што се његова порука чини изразито вишезначном. Бројне и често међусобно противречне интерпретације не само да сведоче о томе, већ показују колико тешко је растумачити смисао овог дела само на основу његове садржине. Из тих разлога се ова студија определила за приступ који најпре жели да разуме његову форму, односно одговори на питање којем жанру овај дијалог уопште припада. Анализа текста показује да Ксенофонт у њему врло вешто спаја неколико жанрова: мудрачку књижевност, епиникију, тиранско огледало и сократовску књижевност. На такав приступ се превасходно одлучио из два разлога. Први, да своју политичку и етичку мисао повеже са цењеним и утицајним традицијама. На тај начин је својим погледима дао додатну тежину и учинио их интересантним за још шири круг људи. Други разлог је да одговори на Платонов радикални раскид са традиционалним начином вођења политике, тј. на његов став да је она апсолутно непоправљива. Испитивање утицаја мудрачке књижевности (*hypothēkai*, Седам мудраца), тиранског огледала (Исократ), епиникије (Симонид, Пиндар) и *logoi Sōkratikoī* (Платон) на Хијеронта показује да се ради о истински софистицираном делу које своју поруку (осуду Платона) вешто уклопило у више различитих жанрова. Ксенофоновим савременицима, којима су ти жанрови били блиски, није било тешко да разумеју поруку Хијеронта, док се она савременим научницима, који нису навикли на овакав приступ, често чини вишезначном и недореченом.

Кључне речи: Хијеронт, Седам мудраца, похвала и дидактичка поезија, тиранско огледало, Ксенофонт, Симонид, Платон, Исократ, Пиндар.