

Xenophon the Literary Critic: The Poetics and Politics of Praise in *Hiero*

Laura Chason Takakjy

THIS PAPER argues that Xenophon's *Hiero* offers a negative critique of the epinician genre that flourished in the fifth century. Although the dialogue clearly has other aims, such as to explore the ethics of tyranny, Xenophon's retrospective reading¹ of epinician poetry has been an underappreciated aspect of the work. Xenophon suggests, it will be contended, that the focus of the genre on wealth and status compromised reputations rather than embellished them. Xenophon's dialogue, however, does more than provide a negative evaluation of epinician poetry's inherent flaws; through dialectic modes, he also tries to improve upon epinician values, particularly by redefining poetic *charis* for the political realm. Xenophon thereby refashions a new kind of political advice that takes cues from poetic genres, and his critical engagement with poetry from the past becomes an act of creativity in itself.

The genre of *Hiero*

Hiero is an unusual work of literature. The dialogue features an imagined advisory session between the mercenary poet Simonides of Ceos and his patron Hiero, the fifth-century Sicilian tyrant.² Simonides praises the tyrant's wealth and

¹ For an articulation of the differences between the literary critic and the literary historian see G. Most, "Socrates, Plato, and the Invention of the Ancient Quarrel," in P. Distrée and F. Herrmann (eds.), *Plato and the Poets* (Cambridge 2011) 20.

² For recent interest in the literary portrayals of the Deinomenid Syracusan monarchy see N. Luraghi, "La Tirannide Siceliota nell'Archeologia di Tucide," *QS* 42 (1995) 35–63; A. Gelenczey-Mihálcz, "Thoughts on

status using the style and language of an epinician poet, which is unsurprising given that the historical Simonides wrote victory odes for his patron.³ Hiero, however, is given the opportunity to present to his *laudator* an unfavorable portrait of his life as a tyrant, citing the hatred and threats of violence that his highly visible status attracts.

The interlocutors in this dialogue are quite different from those featured in Xenophon's other dialogues and in most works in the Platonic corpus,⁴ for the notoriously greedy Simonides takes the place of the usual main interlocutor, Socrates.⁵ Furthermore, the dialogue is unique in showing a learned voice confronting a tyrant of historical significance. Hiero was the younger brother of the tyrant Gelon who defeated Carthage at Himera in 480. Hiero's rule was consistently described as more severe than that of his brother, and

Tyranny: Xenophon's *Hiero*," *ActaArchHung* 40 (2000) 113–120, at 115; E. Buzzetti, *Xenophon the Socratic Prince: The Argument of the Anabasis of Cyrus* (New York 2014) 114–115; K. A. Morgan, *Pindar and the Construction of the Syracusan Monarchy in the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford 2015); T. Philips, *Pindar's Library: Performance Poetry and Material Texts* (Oxford 2016) 121–166.

³ Simonides reportedly negotiated peace between Hiero and Theron (schol. Pind. *Ol.* 2.29c; [Pl.] *Ep.* 2, 311A). For the involvement of Simonides with other major historical figures (e.g. the Pisistratids, Themistocles, and Pausanias) see J. H. Molyneux, *Simonides: A Historical Study* (Wauconda 1992) 65–76, 154–155, 198; H. A. Holden, *A Commentary on Xenophon's Hiero* (London 1888) xxv–xxix. For the relationship between the historical Simonides and Hiero see Molyneux 224–233; Morgan, *Pindar* 42–43, 93–96.

⁴ Plato's *Laws*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman* along with Xenophon's *Hiero* are the exceptions in the genre. For dating *Hiero* see G. J. D. Aalders, "Date and Intention of Xenophon's *Hiero*," *Mnemosyne* N.S. IV 6 (1953) 208–215; J. Hatzfeld, "Note sur la date et l'objet du *Hiéron* de Xénophon," *REG* 59 (1946) 54–70.

⁵ Simonides gained his reputation for greed because he allegedly pioneered the commoditization of poetry. For the ancient sources see Cic. *De or.* 2.351–354, Quint. *Inst.* 11.2.11–16, Phaedrus 4.26, Ael. *VH* 9.1. For commentary see L. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise* (Ithaca 1990) 7, 59–61; Molyneux, *Simonides* 224; Morgan, *Pindar* 93.

Hiero's historical reputation for unscrupulous military action takes center stage in Xenophon's dialogue.⁶

Hiero has been approached in a variety of ways. In the mid-twentieth century, Leo Strauss concluded that the main purpose of the dialogue was to attack tyranny.⁷ A problematic aspect of Strauss's interpretation was that it neglected the historical circumstances in which the dialogue's interlocutors, Hiero and Simonides, related to each other in real life.⁸ Near the end of the twentieth century, classicists began to note the significance of Xenophon's choice of interlocutors and of literary genre. More recent interpretations of the dialogue have argued that Xenophon engages multiple genres of literature, including epinician poetry.⁹ Roberta Sevieri astutely observed

⁶ Hiero succeeded his brother as ruler of Syracuse in 478 (Diod. 11.38). He received a less favorable reputation. Gelon famously defeated the Carthaginians (Herod. 7.166, Diod. 11.24.1). Hiero supposedly had an open quarrel with his brother Polyzelos, who took refuge with his father-in-law Theron, tyrant of Acragas (Diod. 11.48.3–8; schol. Pind. *Ol.* 2.29.b–d). Hiero's military exploits included obtaining Naxos and Catania, which he refounded as Aetna and populated with Syracusans and Dorians. Hiero also helped prevent the destruction of Locris in Magna Graecia by Anaxilas the ruler of Rhegium. For narratives of Hiero's military exploits see Morgan, *Pindar* 172–175, 268–269, 308–309; Holden, *Commentary* 14–18.

⁷ L. Strauss, *On Tyranny* (Ithaca 1963 [1948]). W. R. Newell, "Machiavelli and Xenophon on Princely Rule: A Double-edged Encounter," *Journal of Politics* 50 (1988) 108–130, at 112, followed this interpretation, arguing that in many ways *Hiero* provides a more convincing critique of tyranny than Plato does in Book 9 of the *Republic*.

⁸ For an early critique of Strauss's disavowal of historicist methodologies see C. B. Macpherson, "A Disturbing Tendency in Political Science," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 16 (1950) 98–106, at 104–106. The present argument has less interest in weighing in on the debate over ironic readings of Xenophon's work, although it will assume that some degree of irony does in fact exist in the voice of Simonides. For a critique of Strauss's ironist reading of *Hiero* see V. J. Gray, *Xenophon's Mirror of Princes* (Oxford 2011) 70–77.

⁹ For the interpretation of *Hiero* as adhering to the generic markers of a 'warner-story', the best example of which is the meeting between Croesus and Solon (Hdt. 1.29–31), see V. J. Gray, "Xenophon's *Hiero* and the Meet-

that the dialogue employs many of the essential features typical of epinician poetry, such as commentary on praise and slander.¹⁰

This paper will build upon the idea that *Hiero* intentionally draws from tropes found in epinician poetry. Xenophon, as Sevieri observed and will be maintained here, engages epinician poetry in the portrayal of the relationship of Hiero and Simonides. A smoking gun, so to speak, for the epinician subtext of the work comes in the form of a discussion near the end of the dialogue on the best way to organize choral performances (9.4). This topic of conversation hints at Hiero as a consumer of epinician song. Furthermore, Simonides' advice that Hiero should not participate in athletic contests (11.5–7) reminds the reader that Hiero was an actual victor who was celebrated in epinician performance.

Hiero is more than an intricately allusive work. The dialogue is in part an indictment of the core values associated with epinician poetry. Xenophon's work questions the assumption that the consumption and display of song does good. Since Simonides' epinicians survive only in fragments, those of Pindar and Bacchylides will feature prominently in this discussion.

ing of the Wise Man and Tyrant in Greek Literature,” *CQ* 36 (1986) 115–123. For varying views on Strauss's readings of Xenophon see L.-A. Dorion, *L'autre Socrate* (Paris 2013); D. Johnson, “Strauss on Xenophon,” in F. Hobden and C. J. Tuplin (eds.), *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Enquiry* (Leiden 2012) 123–159.

¹⁰ R. Sevieri, “The Imperfect Hiero: Xenophon's *Hiero* as the (Self-)Taming of a Tyrant,” in C. J. Tuplin (ed.), *Xenophon and His World* (Stuttgart 2004) 277–318. Her argument that there are deep thematic, linguistic, and topical connections between Xenophon's work and epinician poetry is accepted here. The present argument further suggests that Xenophon creates such allusive ties in order to show problematic features of the genre. See also V. Azoulay, *Xénophon et les grâces du pouvoir: de la charis au charisme* (Paris 2004) 269; Philips, *Pindar's Library* 136–142.

The wealth of the tyrant

One key trope relevant to epinician that Xenophon puts under scrutiny is the value of the display of wealth. Xenophon questions the assumption that wealth is unproblematic, as presented in epinician poetry, by having Simonides constantly praise Hiero's wealth and, in turn, by having the tyrant reject the praise of the epinician poet.

Part of the epinician poet's stated task was to praise the victor's high status in the community. The ability to pay for the writing of praise songs and to fund public performance would be a status marker in and of itself.¹¹ For this reason, it is no coincidence that Pindar often compares his poetry to material luxury objects.¹² For instance, he reinforces the idea that poetry is a status symbol when he uses the metaphor of the "treasury of hymns" at Delphi to describe his song in *Pythian* 6 (8–9 ὕμνων θησαυρός). The praise of wealth in its most positive incarnation is also the praise of *megaloprepeia*, which refers to the aristocrat's public beneficence that suits his high social status.¹³ The tyrant receives a special place on the scale of *megaloprepeia* because he has the most material resources to help the community and to pay for lavish entertainment like epinician performances. Thus, in epinician ideology the praise of wealth enhances the perception of *megaloprepeia*.

Xenophon certainly would have been familiar with the poets'

¹¹ The exact composition of the audience is uncertain. Morgan, *Pindar* 114, suggests that Hiero may have had an interest in insuring the presence of a large audience in order to maintain ties with his people. On the Syracusan performance context of the odes to Hiero see Morgan 109–115.

¹² For example, he draws an implicit comparison between his poetry and a wedding gift (*Ol.* 7.1–2). For commentary see Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise* 116–127.

¹³ Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 1122a discussed *megaloprepeia* in conjunction with liturgies. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise* 229–230, points to *Nemean* 1 (31–32) as a good illustration of Pindar's encouragement and praise of victors' *megaloprepeia* more generally in that Pindar expresses that wealth is meant to be displayed in friendship.

portrayal of Hiero in epinician odes, and he takes note of their portrayals of the tyrant as exceedingly rich. In the odes for the historical Hiero, Pindar depicts Hiero's wealth and high status as evidence of *megaloprepia*. For instance, *Olympian* 1.10–14 praises Hiero's power over Sicily's abundant natural resources (πολυμάλω ... Σικελία, “Sicily of many sheep”) and calls attention to his “rich hearth” which represents his lavish entertainment budget (ἀφνεᾶν ... μάκαιραν ... ἐστίαν, “rich and blessed hearth”).

The connection between wealth and virtue is further heightened in Pindar's association of Hiero with Croesus, the historical Lydian ruler and object of legend we find most famously in Herodotus (1.29–45, 85–89). In *Pythian* 1, Pindar creates an elaborate comparison between Croesus and Hiero as objects of enduring praise: Pindar exhorts Hiero to spend resources on his reputation even if the expense is onerous (90 εἴπερ τι φιλεῖς ἀκοᾶν ἀδεῖαν αἰεὶ κλύειν, μὴ κάμνε λίαν δαπάναις, “if you forever love to hear sweet song, don't tire of spending in excess”) in order to reap the kind of reputation that Croesus still enjoys in song even after death. The poet gives the opportunity to his patron to enjoy Pan-Hellenic fame through the reperformance of epinician song at home and abroad.¹⁴ Pindar contrasts the enduring benefits of poetry with the eternal condemnation of those evil rulers who did not spend on song, like Phalaris (*Pyth.* 1.95–100). By praising the tyrant's patronage repeatedly throughout the odes for Hiero, Pindar impresses upon his audience that Hiero has chosen the path of

¹⁴ For the question of reperformance and the possibility of written publication of the odes see L. Athanassaki, “Giving Wings to the Aeginetan Sculptures: The Panhellenic Aspirations of Pindar's *Eighth Olympian*,” in D. Fearn (ed.), *Aegina: Contexts for Choral Lyric Poetry* (Oxford 2011) 257–293; C. Carey, “Pindar, Place, and Performance,” in S. Hornblower and C. Morgan (eds.), *Pindar's Poetry, Patrons and Festivals* (Oxford 2007) 199–210; T. K. Hubbard, “The Dissemination of Epinician Lyric: Pan-Hellenism, Reperformance, Written Texts,” in C. J. Mackie (ed.), *Oral Performance and its Context* (Leiden 2004) 71–94; B. Currie, “Reperformance Scenarios for Pindar's Odes,” in *Oral Performance* 40–70.

Croesus, which is a path of positive fame. Bacchylides also draws similar comparisons between Croesus and Hiero, which may suggest that perhaps Simonides also portrayed Croesus as Hiero's mythical analogue.¹⁵

The positive presentation of Croesus' character in extant victory odes is rather distant from Herodotus' problematic characterization of Croesus' wealth. In Herodotus' account the wise poet and lawgiver Solon criticizes Croesus for trusting that his wealth can provide him with enduring happiness. As Gray noted, it is difficult not to see Xenophon as echoing Herodotus' meeting of Solon and Croesus in the confrontation he imagines between Simonides and Hiero. After all, the conversation between Solon, a poet, and Croesus, a non-Greek, seems close to the very frame of *Hiero*.

A simple comparison of Xenophon's Hiero to Herodotus' Croesus presents several problems. For one, Xenophon provides his own idiosyncratic portrait of Croesus in the *Cyropaedia* which is strikingly different from Herodotus' version. Herodotus' Croesus grows wiser after Cyrus subdues him, but the Croesus of *Cyropaedia* loses his advisory authority as the narrative progresses.¹⁶ Xenophon does not even include the encounter between Solon and Croesus in the *Cyropaedia*, which shows that he is not afraid to depart from Herodotus on matters of plot and narrative focus.

Furthermore, if the Solon-Croesus episode in Herodotus has been appropriated, why does Xenophon choose to depict Simonides, acting as a proxy for Solon, praising Hiero's wealth rather than illuminating its shortcomings? The answer is that

¹⁵ Both Croesus and Hiero were on the margins of Greek civilization; both were monarchs, although Hiero usurped his way into tyranny while Croesus lost his kingship when Cyrus invaded Lydia. Bacchylides (3.90–93) praises Hiero's "bloom of wealth" in the comparison to Croesus.

¹⁶ Croesus first meets Cyrus at *Cyr.* 7.2.9. For an analysis of Xenophon's Croesus see D. L. Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia: Style, Genre, and Literary Technique* (Oxford 1993) 270–271.

Xenophon's Simonides is constrained by his identity as a praise poet; that is, if Simonides were to conduct a critical analysis of Hiero's acquisition and display of goods, he would contradict his epinician task to praise wealth, which Simonides fulfills in the dialogue: unlike Herodotus' Solon, Simonides is not concerned to criticize wealth but adopts an obsequious voice in the first part of the dialogue.¹⁷ In other words, *Hiero* does not feature a simple meeting of a 'wise man' and an ignorant monarch.¹⁸

Furthermore, Xenophon for the first half of the dialogue rejects the aspect of Simonides' reputation that associated him with wisdom. In its place, Xenophon highlights the aspect of Simonides' historical persona that was notoriously acquisitive (Ath. 656D, Ael. *VH* 9.1). After Hiero suggests that his own wealth has not provided him with happiness, Simonides responds as a naïve advisor rather than as the sage (2.2):

ἀλλ' ἐκείνη γε πολὺ διαφέρετε τῶν ἰδιωτῶν, ὅτι μεγάλα μὲν ἐπινοεῖτε, ταχὺ δὲ κατεργάζεσθε, πλείστα δὲ τὰ περιττὰ ἔχετε, κέκτησθε δὲ διαφέροντας μὲν ἀρετῇ ἵππους, διαφέροντα δὲ κάλλει ὄπλα, ὑπερέχοντα δὲ κόσμον γυναιξί, μεγαλοπρεπεστάτας δ' οἰκίας καὶ ταύτας κατεσκευασμένας τοῖς πλείστου ἀξίοις, ἔτι δὲ πλήθει καὶ ἐπιστήμαις θεράποντας ἀρίστους κέκτησθε, ἰκανώτατοι δ' ἐστὲ κακῶσαι μὲν ἐχθρούς, ὀνήσαι δὲ φίλους.

You are very different from private citizens in the following ways: you conceive of great plans and you attain them quickly. You possess very many things in abundance. You have obtained

¹⁷ Sevieri, in *Xenophon and his World* 284, recognizes this point: "With an editorial process largely comparable to that of an encomiastic poet (which is not surprising, after all, since he *is* an encomiastic poet), Simonides proceeds to show Hiero all the advantages his power can have for the improvement of his way of life, provided he can handle it in the right way, of course." What Sevieri does not recognize is that public praise is the problem.

¹⁸ This is not to discount the possibility that Xenophon has Herodotus' meeting of Solon and Croesus in mind; it is well within reason to think that Xenophon is drawing on multiple literary models.

horses that are superior in excellence and weapons that are illustrious in their beauty. You have bountiful decor for women and you have very magnificent houses¹⁹ that are full of everything worth the most. You have obtained servants excellent in skill and many in number, and you are prepared at all times to harm your enemies and to help your friends.

These grand overtures of praise recur throughout the dialogue, and Simonides consistently admires the external assets that show the wealth of Hiero. In this regard, Simonides' praise of Hiero's material possessions is markedly different from Solon's indifference to Croesus' riches. The incongruity of Simonides' praise is not lost on Hiero, and Hiero makes a self-aware rebuttal to such glowing estimations of his wealth (2.4):

ἡ δὲ τυραννὶς τὰ μὲν δοκοῦντα πολλοῦ ἄξια κτήματα εἶναι ἀνεπτυγμένα θεᾶσθαι φανερά πᾶσι παρέχεται, τὰ δὲ χαλεπὰ ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν τυράννων κέκτηται ἀποκεκρυμμένα, ἐνθαπερ καὶ τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν καὶ τὸ κακοδαιμονεῖν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀπόκειται.

Tyranny shows off its seemingly precious possessions outspread and visible for all to see, but it stows hidden away its difficulties within tyrants' hearts in the place where happiness and unhappiness are stored away for humans.

What Simonides consistently misses is what Hiero knows from experience: the visibility of his own wealth has caused invisible harm to his psychological wellbeing. The concentration of words associated with visibility (φανερὰ, "visible," and its opposite ἀποκεκρυμμένα, "stows hidden") and display (ἀνεπτυγμένα, "outspread," and its opposite ἀπόκειται, "store away") in this passage is no coincidence. Simonides does not caution against the fact that those who view (θεᾶσθαι) material possessions may not respond with admiration or goodwill. It becomes clear from Hiero's comments that the display of luxury goods

¹⁹ The adjective μεγαλοπρεπεστάτας points to Simonides' later recommendation to make the city magnificent rather than the private home. See V. J. Gray, *Xenophon: On Government* (Cambridge 2011) 119.

only heightens his isolation from the community.²⁰ The Hiero of the dialogue questions the showy displays that came to define him as the natural analogue to Croesus in epinician poetry. Throughout the dialogue, Hiero describes the many ways in which he has not been able to purchase the admiration of his subjects in the way epinician poetry assumes. For example, he cannot trust the sincerity of his lovers' affections because of their unequal stations (1.27–37). In another protest, he complains that he cannot promote virtuous citizens since he fears their usurpation of his power (5.1). Other troubles that plague the tyrant include a lack of trust in his family (3.8) and the fear of retaliation by those whom he has harmed (2.13–18). It emerges that the wealth of the tyrant does not compensate for the loss of social ties and for the ethical impairment that tyranny brings with it. The social isolation of tyranny, therefore, causes great distress to him, which affects his capacity for pleasure.

Xenophon's commentary on Hiero's distress possibly takes a cue from the portrayal of Hiero in epinician poetry. Of course, the tyrant's woe was a fairly popular trope in itself outside of poetic contexts.²¹ But in epinician Hiero is portrayed as distressed by either metaphorical or physical sickness.²² In *Pythian* 3, Pindar suggests that Hiero has suffered a physical affliction (63–67), and in *Pythian* 1, Pindar also draws comparisons between Hiero and Philoctetes (50), the famously sick Greek hero in the Trojan cycle.²³

²⁰ For the idea that Hiero's chief desire is to be loved see Strauss, *On Tyranny* 91; C. Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince: Republic and Empire in the Cyropaedia* (Berkeley 2001) 147.

²¹ For the topos of the suffering tyrant see Gray, *Xenophon: On Government* 214–216. The theme of the suffering ruler appears in Herodotus: suffering was ultimately the same fate for Croesus in Herodotus' *Histories*. Croesus lost his son to a tragic death (1.43) and then lost his kingdom to Cyrus (1.86).

²² The scholia for *Pythian* 3 (inscr. a, b) report that Hiero suffered from kidney stones. See Morgan, *Pindar* 168–169.

²³ In the prayer at *Pythian* 1.46 Pindar presents the positive and curative role of wealth on the ruler's well-being: he suggests that his poetry can cause

A less literal interpretation of Pindar's presentation of Hiero highlights the poet's promise to rehabilitate a poor reputation in order to immortalize its *laudandus* in a glowing light for the future. Perhaps Pindar casts Hiero as suffering the threat of receiving a poor reputation because tyrants suffer oblivion or infamy, like Phalaris, *unless* they employ poets to immortalize them in song. The epinician genre does not just remember successful athletic endeavors, but also memorializes the good exploits of the ruler more generally. In *Pythian* 1, for example, Pindar's praise of Hiero's athletic victory is placed between a comparison of his martial achievements to Philoctetes', on the one hand, and his founding of Aetna, on the other.²⁴ One of Pindar's main strategies for saving Hiero's reputation, therefore, is to call positive attention to martial exploits.

In Xenophon's work, Simonides' praise provides no relief from the suffering. The jaded tyrant is instead deeply skeptical of the praise he receives from Simonides, and praise has no currency for him. For example, when discussing the issue of the tyrant's reintegration into the community upon returning from conquests, Hiero notes that the private citizen fares much better than he does, since tyrants come home to face new enemies in their angry citizenry (2.8). Furthermore, Hiero complains that he must wage war on his own subjects as part of his project to expand power. In thus threatening the community, the tyrant loses friends, further heightening his social isolation and diminishing his sense of self-worth (2.17).²⁵ Hiero never implies

a "forgetfulness of toils." For song as *λάθρα πόνων* see E. L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* (Berkeley 1962) 46; T. K. Hubbard, *The Pindaric Mind: A Study of Logical Structure in Early Greek Poetry* (Leiden 1985) 76–77.

²⁴ It is possible that Pindar here refers to specific campaigns initiated by Hiero: the successful naval engagement with the Etruscans at Cumae in 474, his intervention on behalf of the Locrians against the Rhegians sometime in the 470's, the defeat of Acragas in 472. See Morgan, *Pindar* 121, 269; B. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes* (Oxford 2010) 64–60.

²⁵ Xenophon has Hiero complain that this dampens his mood in a profound way. His complaint rests on the assumption that, when he kills his

that he believes in the value of funding choral performances for the sake of reintegrating himself back into the community. Praise is not the answer to Hiero's problems. In this respect, Xenophon's perspective seems at odds with the modern theory that epinician song served a social function in cultivating goodwill between the community and the feared returning victor.²⁶

Simonides' emphasis on praise falls on deaf ears, both for Hiero and for the reader. But given the nearly absurd stance taken by Simonides, Xenophon must not intend for us to accept Simonides' praise at face value. Instead, it is plausible that Simonides embodies the role of the flatterer, at least in the first part of the dialogue. Simonides' litany of platitudes only proves one of Hiero's main assertions to be true: the tyrant cannot trust the praise he hears as valid. In a telling passage, Simonides does not question Hiero's suspicion that his followers flatter him with praise (1.15–1.16):

καὶ ὁ Ἱέρων εἶπε· καὶ τί οἶει, ἔφη, τοὺς μὴ λέγοντας κακῶς εὐφραίνειν, ὅταν εἰδῆ τις σαφῶς ὅτι οἱ σιωπῶντες οὗτοι πάντες κακὰ νοοῦσι τῷ τυράννῳ; ἢ τοὺς ἐπαινοῦντας τί δοκεῖς εὐφραίνειν, ὅταν ὑποπτοὶ ᾧσιν ἔνεκα τοῦ κολακεύειν τοὺς ἐπαίνους ποιεῖσθαι; καὶ ὁ Σιμωνίδη εἶπεν· τοῦτο μὲν δὴ ναὶ μὰ τὸν Δία ἔγωγέ σοι Ἱέρων, πάνυ συγχωρῶ, τοὺς ἐπαίνους παρὰ τῶν ἐλευθερωτάτων ἡδίστους εἶναι.

“What pleasure” said Hiero “is derived from not hearing subjects say horrible things when a tyrant undoubtedly knows that everyone is silently thinking evil thoughts toward him? Or why

own subjects, ruling over fewer people makes cheerfulness impossible. Gray, *CQ* 36 (1986) 122, notes that Xenophon elsewhere ascribes importance to cheerfulness for the king: “the pleasure of appearing ‘bright’ is important enough to be subject to the control of the government in Sparta: *Lac. Con.* 13.9, *Hell.* 6.4.16.” Gray’s observation elevates the psychological health of the king to a matter of importance for state stability.

²⁶ This is the theory that epinician song aimed to transform the victor from an object of fear into one of respect and appreciation. See Sevieri, in *Xenophon and his World* 279–281; J. Fontenrose, “The Hero as Athlete,” *CSCA* 1 (1968) 73–104; K. Crotty, *Song and Action: The Victory Odes of Pindar* (Baltimore 1982) 104–122; Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise* 6.

do you think those who praise the tyrant bring pleasure to him when he suspects them of praising him out of flattery?"²⁷ And Simonides responded, "By Zeus, I absolutely agree with you, Hiero, that praise is sweetest from those who are not compelled to give praise."

Xenophon's Hiero expresses his deep suspicion of those who deliver excessive praise, and Simonides' lack of resistance to this sentiment raises questions about his own sincerity. False flattery is not a theme unique to *Hiero*, and there are several possible generic subtexts to note. For instance, Xenophon may draw on the stock character of the *kolax* (flatterer) in Old Comedy to formulate Hiero's critique. Aristophanes and Eupolis portray the *kolax* as an outsider who attempts to curry favor with a benefactor in exchange for free meals, among other favors. *Kolakes* leach on rich and powerful yet dimwitted patrons—in other words, the kind of patron Hiero fears others assume him to be.²⁸ Aristophanes in the *Birds* makes an allusion to Hiero's patronage of praise poets (904 ff.): when the praise poet arrives at the newly founded city in the sky, he is ready to perform a few lines of Pindar in exchange for compensation.²⁹

In allowing others to praise him, Hiero has allowed himself to become an object of *phthonos*, envy.³⁰ *Phthonos* is a danger

²⁷ Gray, *Xenophon: On Government* 112, interprets ὑποπτοι as expressing the tyrant's own suspicion towards his subjects.

²⁸ For the character of the *kolax* in Old Comedy see I. C. Storey, *Eupolis, Poet of Old Comedy* (Oxford 2003) 188–199.

²⁹ Aristophanes bases the mock ode on a fragment of one of Pindar's hyporchemata: Pind. fr.105ab (schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 2.69; cf. schol. Ar. *Av.* 941–943).

³⁰ For *phthonos* as a frequent topic of interest to Xenophon and specifically in connection with *Hiero*, see D. K. O'Connor, "Xenophon and the Envious Life of Socrates," in D. R. Morrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates* (Cambridge 2010) 48–74, at 50–52. Hesiod (*Op.* 26) used the verb φθονέω to describe social feeling that leads to "good strife," but the noun *phthonos* first appears in Pindar's odes. The theme of *phthonos* appears in many genres; in tragedy, for instance, see Aesch. *Ag.* 833. For more on *phthonos* and its synonyms see E. Sanders, *Envy and Jealousy in Classical Athens:*

which Xenophon explores elsewhere; for example, he remarks that the Spartan kings intentionally lead simple lives so as not to rouse the envy of their people (*Lac.* 15.8, cf. *Ages.* 1.4.3). In the *Cyropaedia*, he has Cyrus himself acknowledge that the more possessions a leader has, the more he makes himself vulnerable to those envious of his wealth and station (*Cyr.* 7.5.77, cf. *An.* 1.9.19). At one point Cyrus must explain to Croesus the problems that the display of wealth creates for the success of a regime, given the *phthonos* of others (8.2.19.3–4). In *Memorabilia*, Xenophon’s Socrates asserts that envy is a naturally arising emotion and suggests that the way to loosen its grip is to limit one’s appetite for possessions and instead cultivate the virtue of sharing (2.6.21). Xenophon thus conceptualizes *phthonos* as a common human³¹ emotional state, but one that is not without remedy.

Xenophon’s interest in *phthonos* is evident in *Hiero*, and this is no surprise given that the dialogue alludes so extensively to epinician poetry. The theme of *phthonos* is at home in epinician, as the poet must consciously construct himself as a trustworthy voice who has the integrity to rise above the chatter of his patron’s flatterers and who has the care to advise the tyrant against the *phthonos* that could result from excessive praise.³²

Pindar makes *phthonos* a central concern particularly in the Sicilian odes composed for Hiero, and perhaps for good reason. The historical Hiero supposedly established a force of secret informers who would report slanderers to him, implying

A Socio-psychological Approach (Oxford 2014); P. Bulman, *Phthonos in Pindar* (Berkeley 1992); H. S. Mackie, *Graceful Errors: Pindar and the Performance of Praise* (Ann Arbor 2003) 16–27; D. Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto 2006) 119–120. Morgan, *Pindar* 342–344, discusses the connection between envy and tyranny in the Sicilian odes in particular.

³¹ Xen. *Cyn.* 3.10.5 describes hunting hounds as possessing *phthonos*.

³² See Mackie, *Graceful Errors* 13, who proposes that the “break-off formula” always steers the poem away from excessive praise (*koros*) that may inspire *phthonos*. See also W. H. Race, *Style and Rhetoric in Pindar’s Odes* (Atlanta 1990) 41.

that he was concerned with the speech of his subjects.³³ It is in implied reference to this historical context that Pindar highlights the danger that false flattery poses to Hiero. In *Pythian* 2 he warns Hiero not be fooled by fawning praise lest he become the hideous, ignorant ape the children mock with praise as “beautiful” (72–73).³⁴ In the same poem, Pindar ultimately instructs the tyrant with a variant of the Delphic maxim “know thyself” (72 γένοι οἶος ἐσσι μαθῶν) in order to help him understand that dangerous envy often accompanies praise, something the real Hiero doubtless already knew.³⁵

In Xenophon’s *Hiero*, the *phthonos* of others emerges as a primary reason for the tyrant’s distress.³⁶ Hiero suspects not only that the praise he hears is false but also that it is excessive

³³ Arist. *Pol.* 5.1313b11–16; Plut. *Mor.* 522F–523A, *Dion.* 28. G. Most, *The Measures of Praise: Structure and Function in Pindar’s Second Pythian and Seventh Nemean Odes* (Göttingen 1985) 131–132, sees Pindar’s warnings as “no mere τόπος,” considering Hiero’s reputation for paranoia that survived him despite his attempts to preserve a favorable memory through song.

³⁴ See T. K. Hubbard, “Hiero and the Ape in Pindar, *Pythian* 2.72–73,” *TAPA* 120 (1990) 73–83, for the argument that the negative foil for Rhadamanthys is the ape rather than the children. Pindar’s declaration that a “straight-talking man excels in a tyranny” (73) or in any other form of government distinguishes the poet from dishonest encomiastic poets who lie to their patrons out of fear (86). The poet’s truth-telling, according to Pindar, is an essential quality of good epinician odes. See also Most, *The Measures of Praise* 102–114.

³⁵ For more on the deployment of the Delphic maxim in *Pyth.* 2 see L. Woodbury, “The Epilogue of Pindar’s Second Pythian,” *TAPA* 76 (1945) 11–30. Xenophon was well aware of the impact of this maxim, and characters in his works use various versions of it more than once: Thrasylbulus (*Hell.* 2.4.40–41); Croesus to Cyrus (*Cyr.* 7.2.20–21). The maxim could also encourage the recipient of the advice to rise to his potential, as in *Mem.* 3.7.9 where Socrates rebukes Charmides. For a literary history of the Delphic maxim see E. G. Wilkins. *The Delphic Maxims in Greek Literature* (Chicago 1929) 49–58.

³⁶ *Hier.* 1.5: Simonides expresses understanding of the effects of *phthonos* on the psyche.

and may induce *phthonos* in the audience (1.19).³⁷ His subsequent suicide wish (7.13) emphasizes the tyrant's need for a cure after exposure to such a dangerous environment.³⁸

By the midpoint of the dialogue, Hiero reaches an aporetic moment. He has rejected as unpleasant all of the pleasures and luxuries his high station affords, including praise. He has shown the praise of his martial exploits to be especially problematic for his reputation. In sum, he has proven to a praise poet that the supposed pleasantries of praise are a myth.

Redefining *charis*

In the second half of the dialogue, the domain of the poet becomes the domain of the political actor. Simonides' voice and self-presentation undergo noticeable changes by the dialogue's end. Whereas Xenophon molds Simonides' voice as naïve during the first portion of the dialogue, in the second half Simonides starts to give substantive advice to the tyrant on how to rehabilitate his image. Simonides now generally encourages Hiero to keep a lower public profile and to rein in violent behavior. The poet's advice also includes practical recommendations, such as the need to control mercenaries (10). Other pieces of advice provide further grounds for irony, given the dialogue's epinician subtext, as when Simonides suggests that Hiero not participate in athletic events.³⁹ This abstinence from chariot-racing would have the effect of keeping the tyrant out of the limelight of epinician poetry (11.6–7).⁴⁰

³⁷ See Sevieri, *Xenophon and his World* 282.

³⁸ Cf. Hdt. 7.232, where hanging is identified as a suitable suicide for someone who has lost his honor. Gray notes that Hiero's suicide wish is akin to Socratic *aporia*: *CQ* 36 (1986) 135.

³⁹ Phillips, *Pindar's Library* 137, notes how this prohibition is not one "of simple opposition," but reflects negative views of fifth-century commemorative culture.

⁴⁰ Sevieri, in *Xenophon and his World* 277, finds significance in this piece of advice, but proposes that the advice may be satiric or paradoxical. Whether Hiero could actually apply the advice Simonides gives is not the concern of this argument.

In Simonides' newfound strength as an advisor, Xenophon imaginatively redefines the epinician value of *charis*.⁴¹ *Charis* referred to thanksgiving, graciousness, or gracefulness in rather broad strokes.⁴² In an exhortation to practice *charis*, Simonides instructs Hiero to create a timocracy in which he, the leader, will distribute prizes and honors and thereby cultivate thanksgiving among his people (9.2).⁴³

τὸ μὲν γὰρ διδάσκειν ἃ ἔστι βέλτιστα καὶ τὸν κάλλιστα ταῦτα
ἐξεργαζόμενον ἐπαινεῖν καὶ τιμᾶν, αὕτη μὲν ἢ ἐπιμέλεια διὰ
χαρίτων γίγνεται.

Teaching what is best and praising and honoring whoever has performed tasks most excellently, this concern becomes a matter of *charis*.

Praising and honoring are actions of *charis*, and Simonides suggests that the more *charis* the tyrant sows, the more he will reap. Gone are the days, at least in Simonides' advice, when the tyrant will reveal a harsh face to the world and receive fawning praise in return. Instead, the poet tasks Hiero with activities that will create genuine gratitude.

Xenophon's focus on the potential for *charis* to become a political tool is striking, given the dialogue's poetic and specifically epinician subtext. Generally speaking, poetic *charis* refers to the grace or beauty of poetry. In epinician, *charis* can simply

⁴¹ For the connection between Simonides' advice and princely educational programs proposed by writers like Isocrates and Xenophon see Sevieri, in *Xenophon and his World* 286. Newell, *Journal of Politics* 50 (1988) 117, saw education as an impossibility for Hiero: "The king cannot learn how to rule solely through instruction from an expert—as is the case with arts like farming and smithing—but must possess a good natural character which has been well educated from early life."

⁴² B. MacLachlan, *The Age of Grace* (Princeton 1993) 4–12; W. J. Verdenius, *Commentaries on Pindar I* (Leiden 1987) 103–106.

⁴³ Gelenczey-Mihálcz, *ActaArchHung* 30 (2010) 116–120, noted the timocratic elements in Hiero's advice: by spreading to other people the possibility of attaining honor, Hiero appeals to human beings' inborn desire for profit.

mean the praise poetry itself or can refer to similar objects that are given as tokens of praise or friendship.⁴⁴ The definition is flexible enough to include also offerings given to gods or spirits of dead kin.⁴⁵ The poet offers *charis* to the epinician victor as a way to channel the community's appreciation for winning games and for providing the city a public performance. Communal thanksgiving is the topic of *Pythian* 2, a poem in which Pindar draws a comparison between the mythical king Cinyras and Hiero. Both leaders are shown to receive thanks from the community for protecting the innocent during times of war, and both continue to receive thanks through song thereafter.⁴⁶ The myth underlines how *charis* expresses the community's respect for the morality of the ruler.⁴⁷ In this regard, *charis* poetically bestows honor when due.

Poetic *charis*, however, has another side; it also refers to poetry's near-magical ability to manipulate the truth. Pindar recognizes in *Olympian* 1 that *charis* can distort the truth for harmful ends (28–32):

ἦ θαυματὰ πολλὰ, καὶ πού τι καὶ βροτῶν
 φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον
 δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι.
 Χάρις δ', ἅπερ ἅπαντα τεύχει τὰ μείλιχα θνατοῖς,
 ἐπιφέρεισα τιμὰν καὶ ἄπιστον ἐμήσατο πιστὸν

⁴⁴ For *charis* particularly in epinician poetry see MacLachlan, *The Age of Grace* 87–123.

⁴⁵ MacLachlan, *The Age of Grace* 89: “*Charis*, then, in the epinician context, can represent the praise song itself or the public recognition that must be kept alive in song; but not to be forgotten is the fact that it represents the gratification of one man, the victor.” For the association of *charis* with funeral libations and the consciousness of the dead see C. Segal, “Messages to the Underworld: An aspect of Poetic Immortalization in Pindar,” *AJP* 102 (1985) 199–212; Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise* 66–70.

⁴⁶ C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar* (Salem 1981) 21–64, discusses the connection between Cinyras' actions to help the Cypriots (perhaps an invention of Pindar) and Hiero's protection of the West Locrian maidens.

⁴⁷ MacLachlan, *The Age of Grace* 120–123.

ἔμμεναι τὸ πολλάκις.

Certainly there are many wonders, and, without a doubt, the rumors of mortals, stories that deceive, are embellished with alluring lies. *Charis*, which makes everything gentle for mortals and confers honor, contrives even that the unbelievable become believable.

Pindar recognizes here the power of *charis* to achieve its poetic goal of either entertaining or praising, or both. The tantalizing effects of poetry, according to Pindar, lend credibility to stories that lack truth and thereby transform an object of scorn into an object of praise, or vice versa. Pindar draws a similar distinction in *Nemean* 7.20–23 when he notes the service that Homer did to exaggerate the honor that Odysseus deserves, at the expense of Ajax. As a result, Odysseus enjoys a reputation far greater than he merits and owes it to Homer's poetic skill.⁴⁸ Poetry, then, is presented by Pindar as having the dubious ability to rehabilitate a reputation even when undeserved, as in the case of Odysseus. The poet, therefore, has the power to distribute honor to whomever he believes, or would like the audience to believe, honor is due. Pindar portrays his own praise poetry as possessing these powers. Xenophon, however, suggests in *Hiero* that praise possesses limited currency, as Hiero's recitation of complaints proves.

Xenophon's dialogue responds to the portrayal of *charis* in epinician poetry by redefining *charis* as a political tool rather than as a poetic principle. This redefinition is never overtly stated, but the epinician subtext certainly suggests Xenophon's critical reimagining of the role that *charis* can play in rulership. For example, Simonides explicitly encourages the tyrant to become a source for dispensing *charis* and then asks the following rhetorical question (8.3–4):

⁴⁸ For more on Pindar's treatment of Homer in *Nemean* 7 see Carey, *Commentary* 146, 180–181.

ιδὼν γὰρ πρῶτον προσειπάτω τινὰ φιλικῶς ὅ τε ἄρχων καὶ ὁ
ιδιότης. ἐν τούτῳ τὴν ποτέρου πρόσρησιν μᾶλλον εὐφραίνειν
τὸν ἀκούσαντα νομίζεις ... οὐκοῦν τοῦτο σαφές, ὅτι αἱ ἀπὸ τῶν
δυνατωτάτων θεραπείαι καὶ χαρὰν ἐμποιοῦσι μεγίστην;

For let's imagine two men say something friendly: one is a leader
and the other a private citizen. In this scenario, which address
do you think would produce more pleasure for the listener? ... Is
it not clear that attention from the most powerful produces the
greatest *charis*?

Simonides before focused largely on the sensual and psycho-
logical experience of Hiero, but now he centers attention on
the pleasure that Hiero's subjects will feel if he pays more at-
tention to their psychological yearning for praise and not to his
own. Xenophon's focus on the citizen contrasts starkly with the
epinician focus on performance that aims explicitly to please
aristocrats or tyrants, like Hiero, even if in fact entertainment
trickled down to the citizenry.⁴⁹ By the end of the dialogue,
Xenophon has Simonides reimagine *charis* in a context where
the ruler now dispenses honor to his community rather than
waits for it to come to him. This is why, as mentioned above,
Simonides recommends that the ruler distribute prizes at
games—rather than receive them, as the historical Hiero did
and the Hiero of the dialogue does (11.6–7). Instead, Simoni-
des instructs Hiero to concentrate on making his city thrive
(εὐδαιομονεστάτην) and exhorts him to compete metaphori-
cally with other heads of state in *megaloprepeia* and in moral
excellence rather than in the athletic arena (11.17 νικῶν τῷ
καλλίστῳ μεγαλοπρεεστάτῳ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀγωνίσματι).

Along the same lines, Simonides warns Hiero against assign-
ing punishments (9.3):

ἐγὼ οὖν φημι ἀνδρὶ ἄρχοντι τὸν μὲν ἀνάγκης δεόμενον ἄλλοις
προστακτέον εἶναι κολάζειν, τὸ δὲ τὰ ἄθλα ἀποδιδόναι δι'
αὐτοῦ ποιητέον.

⁴⁹ At *Olympian* 6.11 Pindar praises a private citizen of Syracuse named Hagesias, described as a prominent person. Unlike Hiero, Hagesias has received his station without *phthonos*, according to Pindar.

I pronounce that a great ruler should delegate to others the task of punishing those who need it and should reserve for himself the privilege of awarding the prizes.

According to Xenophon's Simonides, the ruler is to praise the behavior of his subjects as an epinician poet would praise his patron. Just as poets would not blame or scorn their *laudandi*, neither ought rulers their citizenry. As a praise poet, Simonides shares with Hiero this basic principle of encomiastic convention as a practical trick of *charis*.

Simonides also notes that Hiero's newfound likability will cause him to become more attractive to potential lovers (8.6):

αὐτὸ γὰρ τὸ τετιμῆσθαι μάλιστα συνεπικοσμεῖ, ὥστε τὰ μὲν
δυσχερῆ ἀφανίζειν, τὰ δὲ καλὰ λαμπρότερα ἀναφαίνειν.

Being honored itself produces beauty; it conceals offences and makes virtues shine brighter.

Like poetic *charis*, honor has the ability to hide the morally ugly by drawing out the morally beautiful. Xenophon exploits the aesthetic associations of this moral language for a reason. In the first half of the dialogue, Simonides put an emphasis on the aesthetic objects that Hiero possesses and flaunts, including praise as a sort of aesthetic status symbol. By the end of the dialogue, Simonides recommends turning praise on its head in order to focus the attention of the leader on becoming the embodiment of *charis*. Only when the tyrant stops waiting for fawning praise will he cultivate genuine thanksgiving by transacting goodwill, Xenophon implies. In return, Hiero will be able to reap worldwide fame not advertised by one poet but recognized by everyone (11.9).

Conclusions: Xenophon the literary critic

This proposed reading has wider implications for Xenophon's engagement with poetry beyond the frame of the dialogue, and an important question must be raised: does Xenophon recommend a total abstinence from song, given his presentation of its potential to harm? The answer may be found within the dialogue itself, particularly in a passage where Hiero longs for his former ability to enjoy song that disap-

peared when he became an object of song (6.1–3):

βούλομαι δέ σοι, ἔφη, ὦ Σιμωνίδη, κάκεινας τὰς εὐφροσύνας δηλώσαι, ὅσαις ἐγὼ χρώμενος ὅτ' ἦν ιδιώτης, νῦν ἐπειδὴ τύραννος ἐγενόμην, αἰσθάνομαι στερόμενος αὐτῶν. ἐγὼ γὰρ ζυνην μὲν ἡλικιώταις ἡδόμενος ἡδομένοις ἐμοί, συνῆν δὲ ἐμαντῶ, ὅποτε ἡσυχίας ἐπιθυμήσαιμι, διῆγον δ' ἐν συμποσίοις πολλάκις μὲν μέχρι τοῦ ἐπιλαθέσθαι πάντων εἴ τι χαλεπὸν ἐν ἀνθρωπίνῳ βίῳ ἦν, πολλάκις δὲ μέχρι τοῦ ὄδαίς τε καὶ θαλίας καὶ χοροῖς τὴν ψυχὴν συγκαταμιγνύναι, πολλάκις δὲ μέχρι κοίτης ἐπιθυμίας ἐμῆς τε καὶ τῶν παρόντων. νῦν δὲ ἀπεστέρημαι μὲν τῶν ἡδομένων ἐμοί διὰ τὸ δούλους ἀντὶ φίλων ἔχειν τοὺς ἐταίρους, ἀπεστέρημαι δ' αὖ τοῦ ἡδέως ἐκείνοις ὀμιλεῖν διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν ἐνορᾶν εὐνοίαν ἐμοὶ παρ' αὐτῶν.

“Simonides,” said Hiero, “I wish to show you the pleasures I enjoyed when I was a private citizen, but now which I think I am deprived of ever since I became tyrant. For I spent time with my age-mates then; they pleased me and I pleased them. I retired to myself whenever I desired rest. I spent time at *symposia* (συμποσίοις)⁵⁰ often until I forgot all the troubles of mortal life, often until my soul was absorbed in songs and revels and dance, often until the desire for sleep fell on me and all my company. But now I am deprived of those who were endeared to me since I have slaves as companions instead of friends; I am deprived of pleasant gatherings with them because I see no goodwill in them towards me.

Xenophon highlights the difference between Hiero the audience-member and Hiero the tyrant. Before Hiero became a ruler, song had provided him with an analgesic from the human struggles he now cannot escape as tyrant. It was only after becoming tyrant that he felt the dangers of song. In this passage, we are able to glimpse the true restorative property of

⁵⁰ For the difficulty in translating the word *symposia* and discussion of whether these *symposia* would consist of a large public or a small elite audience see F. Budelmann, “Epinician and the *Symposion*: A Comparison with the Epinicia,” in P. Agocs et al. (eds.), *Reading the Victory Ode* (Cambridge 2012) 173–190; J. S. Clay, “Pindar’s Sympotic *Epinicia*,” *QUCC* 62 (1999) 25–34.

poetry and to recognize that Xenophon sees a place for entertainment outside the context of praise. Epinician and other encomiastic genres remove the social experience of song that so contributes to the pleasure that the audience or symposium member feels as part of the revelry, as Hiero describes. This is because public exaltation of the tyrant serves to broadcast the simple fact that he has no social equals. The epinician performance, therefore, becomes a visible acknowledgment that the tyrant has no genuine social ties, and without social ties he cannot enjoy the social benefits of performance. In his complaint to Simonides about his inability to enjoy song, Hiero's protest is, of course, playful, since he is confronting one of the praise poets who has ruined song for him. Within the frame of the dialogue, the prospect that Simonides' poetry will serve any good for Hiero is nowhere to be found.

Simonides does provide a diagnosis for Hiero's frustrations with performance. Near the end of the dialogue Simonides notes that it is proper for the leader to delegate organizing choruses to others; Simonides suggests that this is a good model for other ways in which he will run his newly-formed timocracy (9.4):

καὶ γὰρ ὅταν χοροὺς ἡμῖν βουλόμεθα ἀγωνίζεσθαι, ἄθλα μὲν ὁ ἄρχων προτίθησιν, ἀθροίζουσιν δὲ αὐτοὺς προστέτακται χορηγοῖς καὶ ἄλλοις διδάσκειν καὶ ἀνάγκην προστιθέναι τοῖς ἐνδεῶς τι ποιῶσιν. οὐκοῦν εὐθὺς ἐν τούτοις τὸ μὲν ἐπίχαρι διὰ τοῦ ἄρχοντος ἐγένετο, τὰ δ' ἀντίτυπα δι' ἄλλων. τί οὖν κωλύει καὶ τὰλλα τὰ πολιτικὰ οὕτως περαίνεσθαι;

For whenever we want to hold a choral competition, the ruler awards the prizes, but the chorus-masters are in charge of forming the choruses, and others are in charge of teaching them and punishing those who perform insufficiently. In this example, pleasure becomes a job for the ruler while others do what is not pleasurable. What prevents you from conducting all other political matters in this way?

This advice assumes that in Simonides' ideal city, so to speak, there will be public entertainment. Simonides draws attention to the competitive ethos associated with choral performance and observes that it can appeal to citizens' love of honor and

love of song so long as Hiero does not become deeply involved with the logistics of performance.⁵¹ Furthermore, Simonides recommends that the tyrant not compete with citizens in the games. If he does not compete, then his wealth, horses, and superior status will not be displayed while perhaps his hardships will disappear and he will feel pleasure once more. In effect, Simonides recommends that Hiero resign as a leading character in epinician poetry, allowing him to escape comparison to problematic figures like Croesus. Simonides concludes the whole dialogue with a declaration that, if Hiero makes these changes, then there will be fewer opportunities for his people to harbor *phthonos* and happiness will follow (11.15).

In coming to these practical solutions through conversation, Xenophon praises the benefits of a prose dialogue while illuminating the shortcomings of poetic praise. The dialectic between Hiero and the poet reveals why praise fails to bring into effect exactly what it purports to do: to please the tyrant. Only through the exchange of ideas, experiences, and critique does practical advice for the benefit of the ruler become a possibility. Alone, both of the interlocutors possess limitations, but together they are able to reach a moment of revelation. Reliance on poetic *charis* to enhance reputation has flaws that only find redemption in the revisionary perspective of the dialogue. In this regard, Xenophon's ideas about leadership, as expressed in the dialogue, receive inspiration from poetic discourses but ultimately depart from them.

One literary goal of *Hiero*, then, is to call attention to the need to engage poetry critically.⁵² The epinician poem

⁵¹ Xenophon's Socrates states that the Athenians are exceptional in choral performance because they exceed others in φιλοτιμία rather than in voice or strength (*Mem.* 3.3.13).

⁵² In this regard, we can compare the dialogue's intent to Plato's *Ion*. There Plato questioned a rhapsode's ability to deploy Homer to instruct others. As the dialogue unfolds, it emerges that Ion does not really understand the topics upon which Homer's poetry touches, like horsemanship. We can compare Ion's empty recitation to Simonides' likewise weak deployment of tropes at the beginning of *Hiero*. Neither Ion as the performer nor

promises both fame and requital for toil, but, in Xenophon's dialogue, the tropes found in poetry do not provide comfort to the victor since the toil was corruptly executed. In another regard, Xenophon may have written the dialogue as a way to comment on the folly of Hiero and all ethically compromised rulers who paid for poetry yet who were ultimately unable to secure for themselves positive reputations. Beyond the *de facto* corrupting nature of tyranny, the larger problem is the presumption that praise poetry can cover up tyranny and other ethical failings. *Hiero* serves to remind the ruler that only favorable actions, rather than favorable poetry, cultivate a favorable memory for the future.⁵³

October, 2016

Department of Classics
University of Texas
Austin, TX 78712
ltakakjy@utexas.edu

Simonides as a creator of performances has mastery over their subject matter. In other words, "The Socratic method turns out to be in fact Plato's alternative to the dogmatic attitude of the praisers": C. Capuccino, "Plato's *Ion* and the Ethics of Praise," in *Plato and the Poets* 20.

⁵³ I am grateful to Thomas Hubbard, Kyle Sanders, and the *GRBS* editor and referee for their constructive feedback. An abbreviated form of this paper was presented at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Society for Classical Studies, and I would like to thank those in attendance at the presentation for their comments.